TSUTOMU NIHEI

BLAME ACADEMY

ABSOLON

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BLAME ACADEMY! AND SO ON COMMENTARY, BY TOHRU HONDA

01

ZEB-NOID

THE WAR AGAINST THE FLIES THAT BEGAN HUNDREDS OF MILLIONS OF YEARS AGO WITH THE BIRTH OF HUMANITY HAD MIGRATED FROM ITS GENESIS ON EARTH TO A DISTANT PLANET, WHERE IT APPROACHED ITS CONCLUSION...

SYSTEM RE-CHECK...

FULL PHASE CHARGE, MOBILITY SYSTEMS UNABLE TO BOOT...

UNABLE TO DISPLAY CRUISER LOCATION... ALL WIPED OUT, I SUPPOSE.

ONE NEEDLE-FLY AP-PROACH-ING...

ZZT...

...COMING TO FINISH ME OFF.

RE-CHECK... NO RE-SPONSE.

キラン
GLINT

ゴオオオオ
GBWOAAAH
GRRK
GJIJIJII

GRRK

キィィィン

kWEEEE

DUDUDUDUN

ガシュッ

GSHUK

VRUP

GRRRG

FOR GENERATIONS, THE HUMANS AND FLIES HAD MANIPULATED THEIR GENES TO PRODUCE STRONGER AND STRONGER SOLDIERS. THROUGH THE COINCIDENCE OF MUTATION, THIS PAIR WOUND UP CAPABLE OF MATING. THIS MIRACULOUS ENCOUNTER OF EXTREMELY RARE BEINGS WAS THE FIRST STEP TO THE EVENTUAL UNIFICATION OF THE TWO SPECIES AND THE END OF THEIR LONG, LONG WAR.

01

ZEB-NOID - END

02

BLAME ACADEMY!

KILLY-KUN.

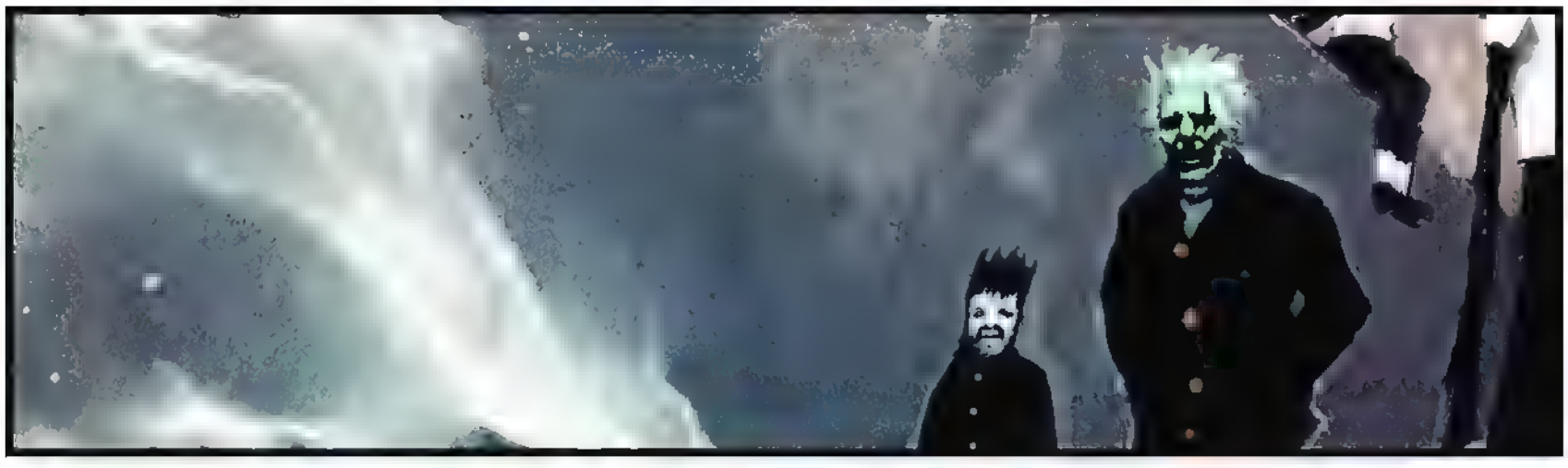
KILLY-KUN

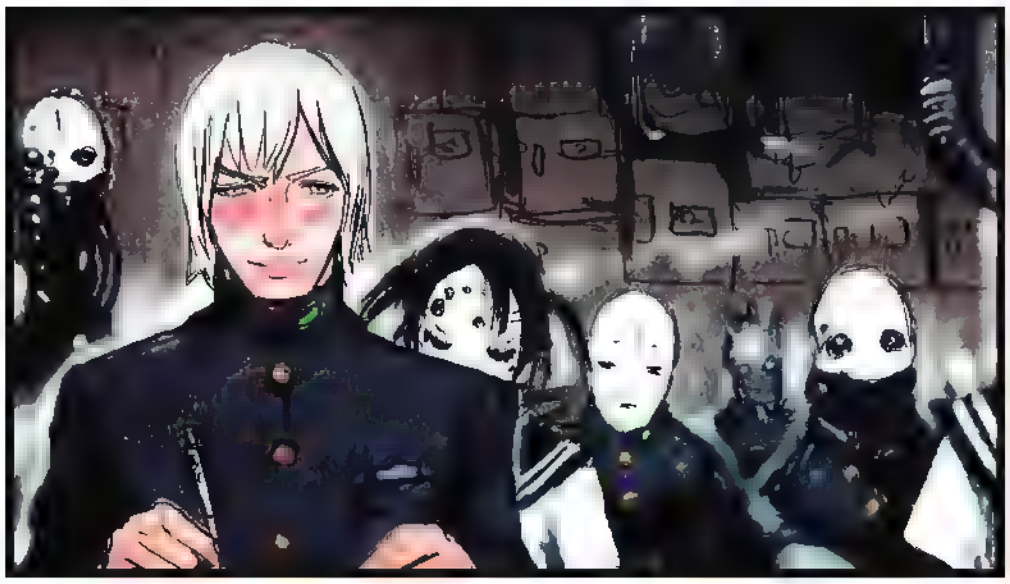
KILLY-KUN.

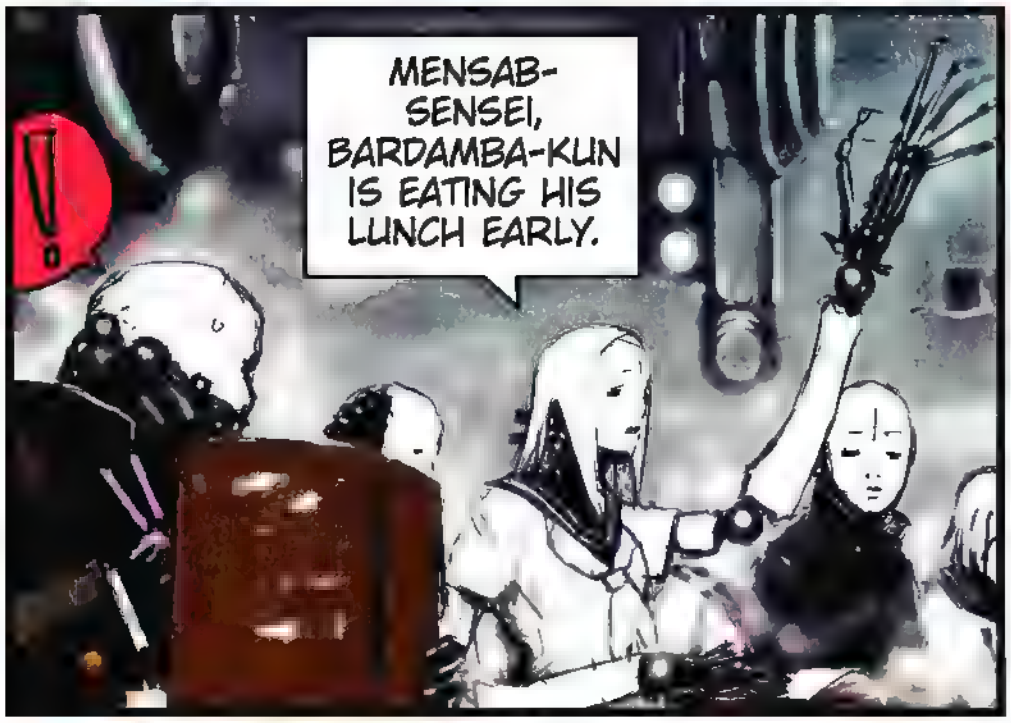
ズル SLURP

HEY, DHOMO-KUN!

GOOD LUCK IN P.E. TODAY.






MENSAB-
SENSEI,
BARDAMBA-KUN
IS EATING HIS
LUNCH EARLY.

GAHH!

LET'S CON-
TINUE THE
LESSON.

ZOOP

ZIK

KCHAK

ガキキ

TING

HOW DARE YOU SPEAK TO A TEACHER THAT WAY!

WHAT WAS THAT FOR, BITCH?!

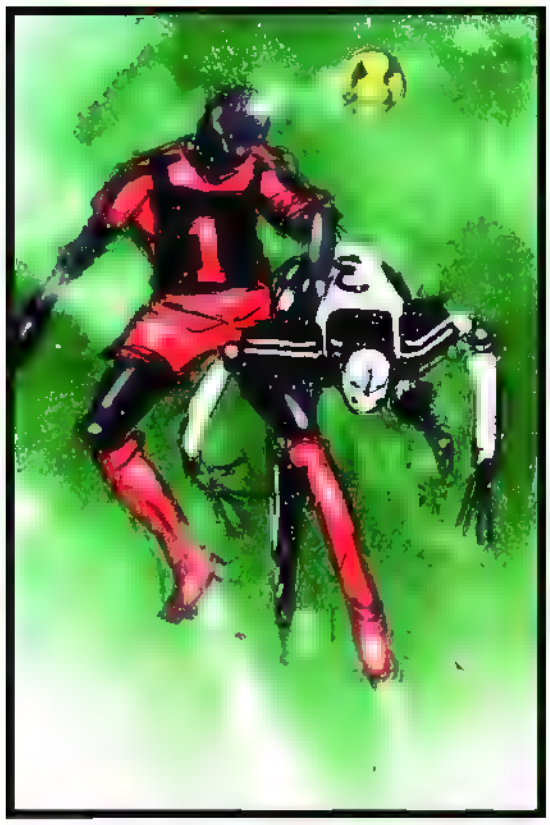
THUNK

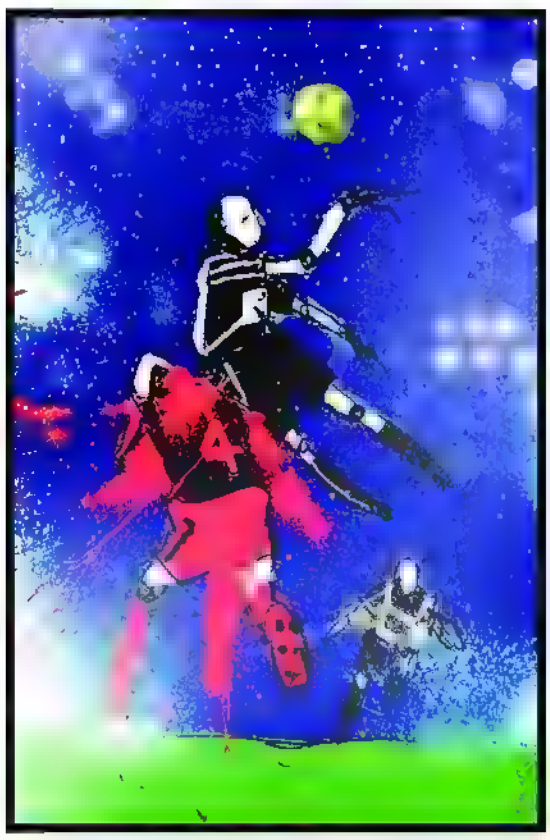
DADOOM!

13
11

11
13

1
4





SANA-KAN-SENSEI! I HEAR YOU OPENED FIRE ON A STUDENT *AGAIN?*

I DO NOT APPROVE OF THIS!

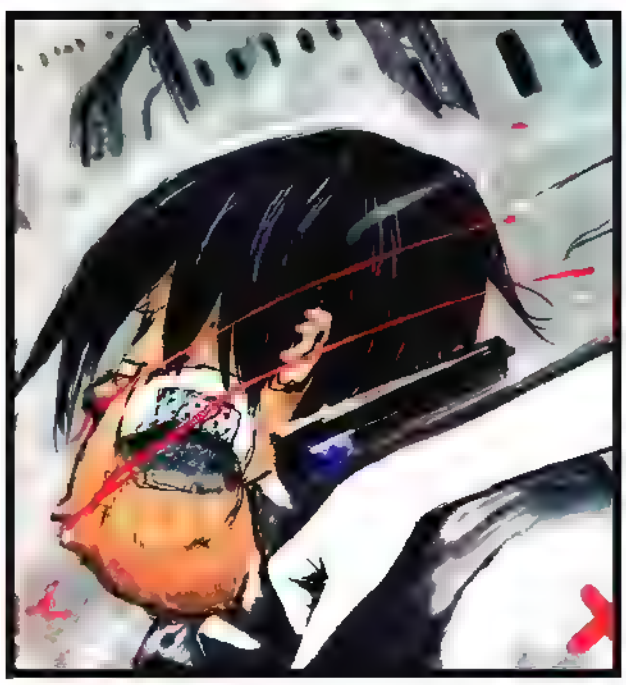
N-NO, IT'S QUITE ALL RIGHT.

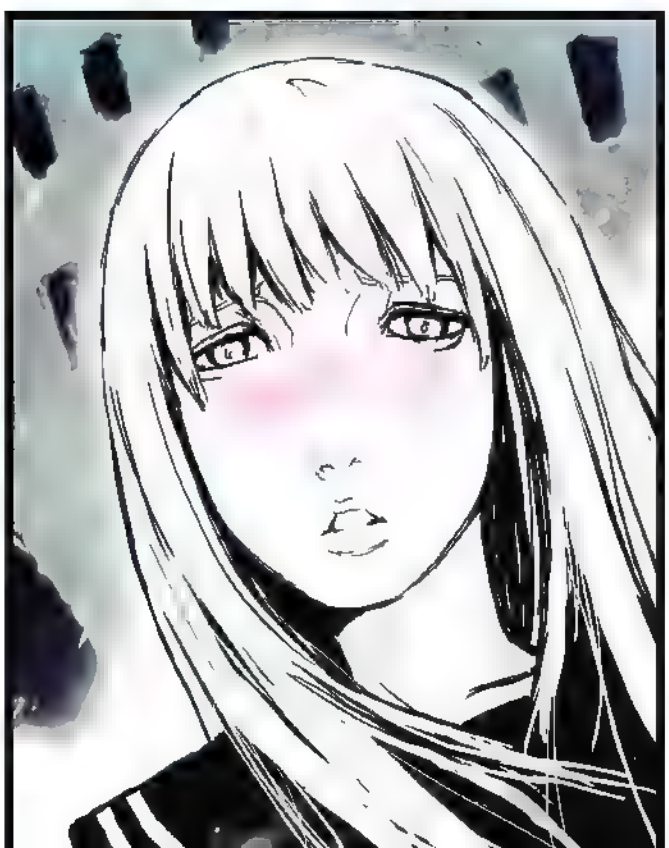
YOU'VE GOT A PROB-LEM?

KILLY-KUN!

WHOOSH

LET'S WALK TOGETHER!





02

BLAME ACADEMY! - END

03

BLAME ACADEMY! FIELD TRIP TO NARA

GRRGGG

LISTEN TO THIS, KILLY-KUN! IT SAYS THAT IN THE AGE THIS TEMPLE WAS BUILT, PEOPLE REALLY DID JUMP OFF THE PLATFORM TO THE GROUND BELOW.

THAT'S AMAZING! AND HARDLY ANY OF THEM DIED.

THE ANCIENTS MUST HAVE HAD VERY STURDY BODIES.

ZIP

!?

KRAKK

SHHH

EEEK!

GYAAA

ギャアアアアアキャーーー

OOOH, LOOK AT ALL THE DEER...

OH GOD!

STOP, OR I'LL SHOOT YOU BOTH.

WE'RE SORRY, SANA-KAN-SENSEI.

GCHUNK

DADADADUM

UGH! WHAT'S WITH THEM?

ZZAD

FLAP FLAP

GRRGG

IS IT ME...OR IS THIS FIELD TRIP KIND OF WEIRD?

DA

DA

DOOM

KSHUNK

KRUNK

CLANK

REMEMBER US?

LONG TIME NO SEE, KILLY.

GRIIIGG

HEH HEH HEH HEH HEH

YOU DON'T?!

...

SO YOU'RE SAYING ALL THIS STUFF IS A PLOT YOU COOKED UP TO GET BACK AT HIM IS BASED ON A TEN-YEAR-OLD GRUDGE?

YOU'RE THE SILICON CREATURES FROM THE FIRST VOLUME OF BLAME!, AREN'T YOU?

BUT I THOUGHT KILLY SHOT YOU...

MY ANGER STEMS FROM THREE YEARS AGO!!

NO! LOOK AT THIS!!

パラパラ

LOOK AT YOU ALL, CARRYING ON LIKE FOOLS AND PRETENDING TO BE SCHOOL CLASS-MATES. AND YET...

WHY HASN'T EVERYONE RAGED ETERNALLY AGAINST MY ONLY IMAGE?

BLAME ACADEMY!

SCHOOL IS A BATTLEFIELD.

TSUTOMU NIHEI

...

I DIDN'T EVEN... SHOW UP...

TAKE THIS!!!

VWO

HOH

HOH

DAMN YOU! WHAT WAS YOUR NAME-- CIBO? YOU REALLY WANT TO HOG THE SPOTLIGHT SO BAD?! YOU AMATEUR!

KCHING

BLAM!

"VWO HOH HOH," INDEED! YOUR WEAPON DID NOTHING!

ZDOOM

BOM

GRUNCH

HEH HEH HEH! THAT WAS A LASER THAT DISINTEGRATES WOMEN'S CLOTHING!

03

BLAME ACADEMY!
FIELD TRIP TO NARA - END

04

BLAME ACADEMY! BENEATH THE SAKURA TOWER

WHOA! THAT'S SOME WIND!

EEEP!

GWOHHH

IT'S THE MATTER CONVERSION TOWER.

FWUP

YEAH.

WE FINALLY SNUCK IN.

NOW WE JUST HAVE TO RUN IT WITH THE STRUCTURAL ATTRIBUTE MODIFICATION BOARD INSERTED.

AND THEN THIS ACADEMY WILL BE UTTERLY DESTROYED.

WHAP

IT'S A SHAME THE SCHOOL WILL BE GONE, BUT IT'S OUR ONLY CHOICE.

FAREWELL, DEAR ACADEMY! ACTIVATION SWITCH, ON!

CLICK

!

AH, HERE IT IS.

VVVMMM

萌え属性転写析

*MOÉFICATION DISPLAY (CRITICALLY UNSTABLE, DO NOT USE)

萌え属性転写析

*MOÉFICATION DISPLAY

臨界平測 VAVUMMM!
使弓厳禁

*CRITICALLY UNSTABLE
DO NOT USE

BUT...I'M HOLDING THE STRUCTURAL ATTRIBUTE MOD. WHAT BOARD DID YOU PUT IN THERE?

VMMM

組織属性転換析

*STRUCTURAL ATTRIBUTE MODIFICATION

BOMP

I CAN'T SEE A THING!

NURD

NURD

WHAT?! HOW COME I'M WEARING GLASSES ALL OF A SUDDEN?!

BOYOYOING

GAHK!!

WHAT'S WITH YOUR FACE? WHAT'S WITH... *THOSE* ?!

HMM... AS A MATTER OF FACT, WE MIGHT BE ABLE TO SLIP INTO THE SCHOOL LIKE THIS!!

CRAK

KILLY-KUN!

MORNING!

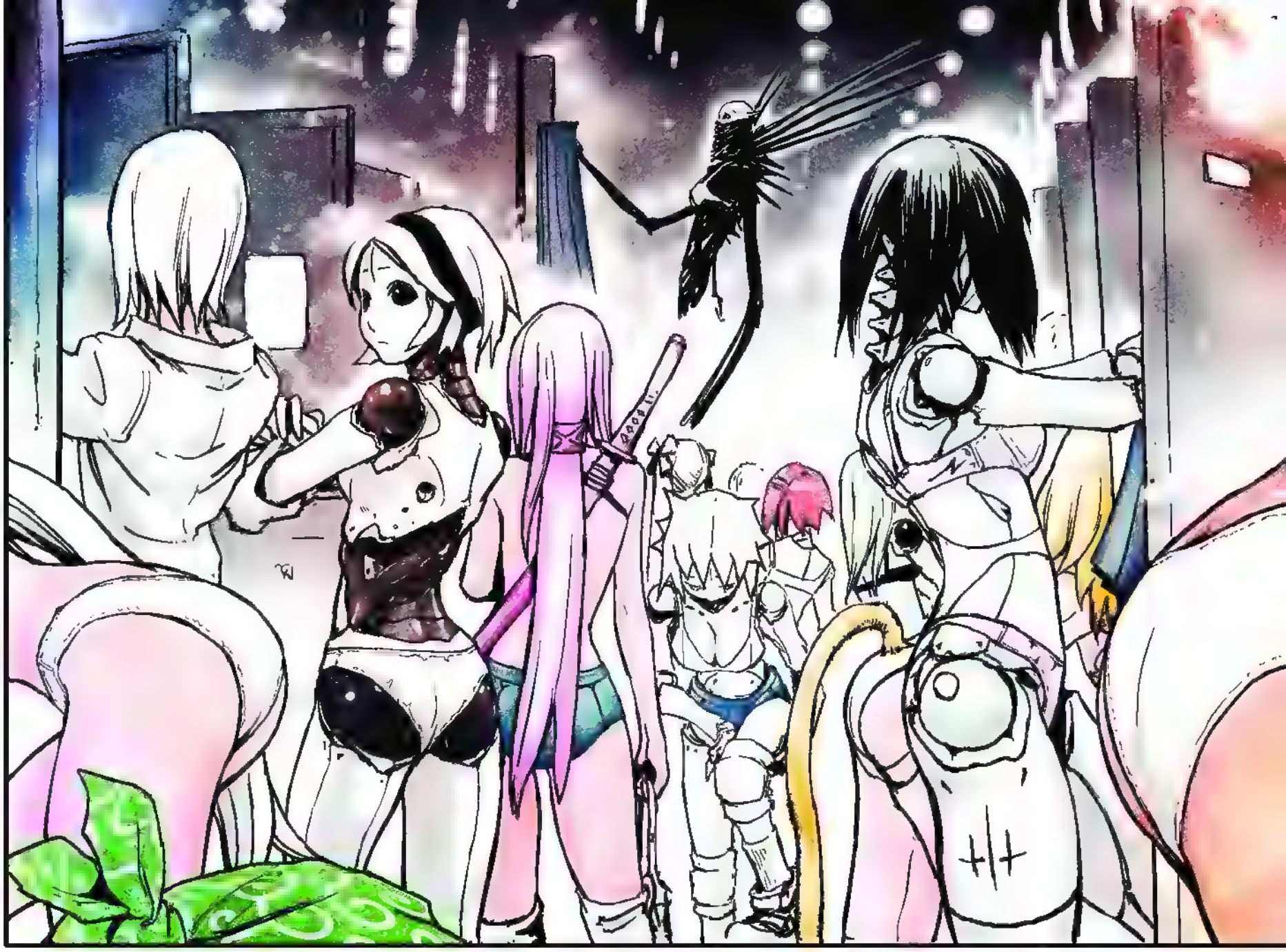
ZWIM

HI, CIBO.

HI!

WHAT'S WITH THESE FOOLS? NONE OF THEM HAS REALIZED HOW THEY'VE ALL CHANGED!

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT THIS.



I THINK I'M GOING TO THE NURSE'S OFFICE AFTER ALL, DHOMO.

SANA-KAN-SENSEI! ICO'S GOT A STOMACH ACHE. CAN I TAKE HIM TO THE NURSE?

SHUT UP! I CAN GO ON MY OWN!

GOTTA PISS.

LEAVE!

KRUNCH

WHAT'S YOUR PROB-LEM?

GET OUT, I SAID!

WHAT, YOU JUST NEEDED TO TAKE A CRAP?

SHUT UP! JUST GET OUTTA HERE!

CRAASH

THUNK

NEE-NEE?

?!!

CIBO!

ポー

たんっ

HUP

GRRGG

ゴゴゴ

NEXT UP, CIBO!

TAP TAP

トントン

WHAT'S ALL THAT RACKET ABOUT ?!

PICKLE-SENSEI, I THINK I RECOGNIZE THIS FROM THE CLASS FIELD TRIP.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING, SNEAKING THIS BACK TO THE SCHOOL?

Y-YOU BOYS ARE SUPPOSED TO BE IN CLASS! GET OUT OF HERE!!

YOU'RE RIGHT...IT'S THE FEMALE CLOTHING DISINTE-GRATION DEVICE...

I THOUGHT IT WAS BUSTED...

WHOMP

BUMP

OOF!

NO WAY, SENSEI!! YOU MADE THIS?! IT'S MINE NOW!

VWO HOH HOH

WOOHOO!

GIVE THAT BACK !!

CLIK

V.HOH

HOH

HOH

WA-CHA'A?

VHOH

HOH

HOH

BOOM

BOOM

BOOM

FWUMP

HUUUP

FZZT

ZAP

ヒ…

ZAP

ZAP

ZAP

STUPID JERK DHOMO !!

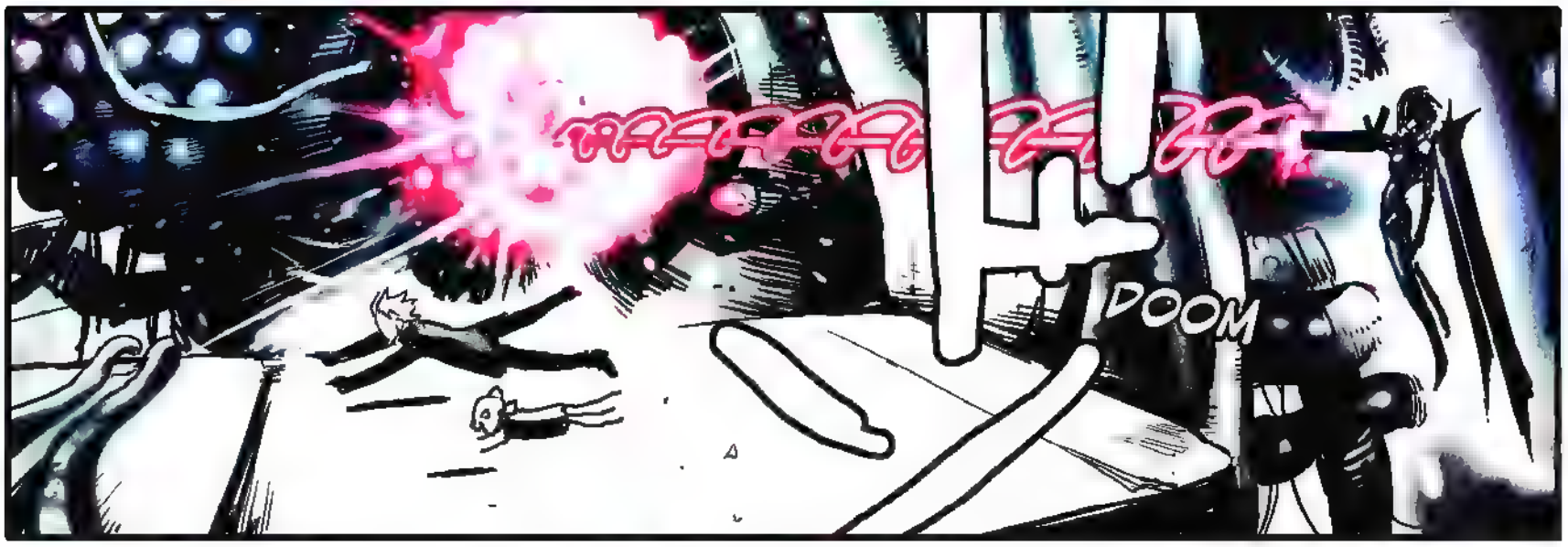
WHAAAAT?!

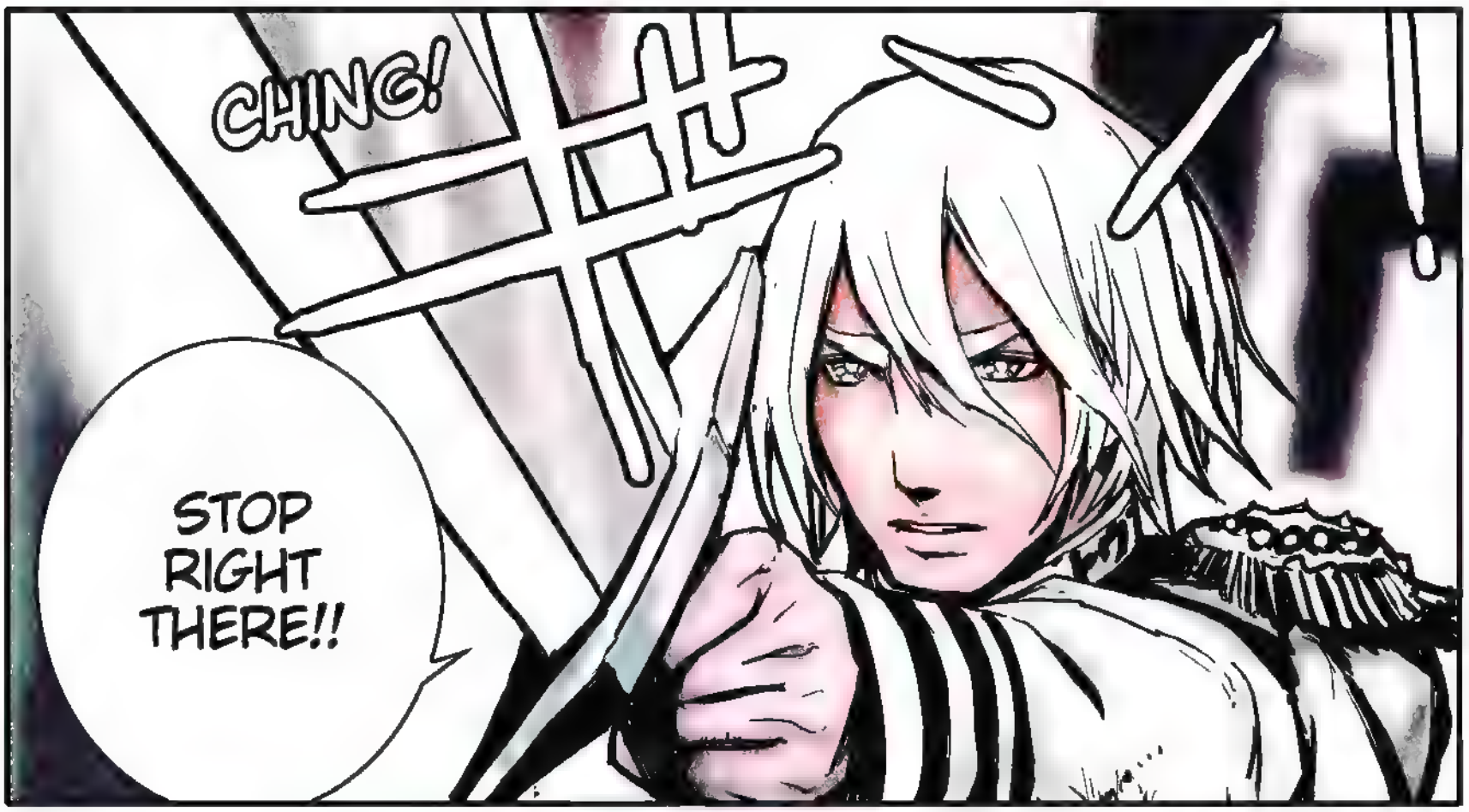
SANA-KAN-[illegible]SEI!!

SPLURT

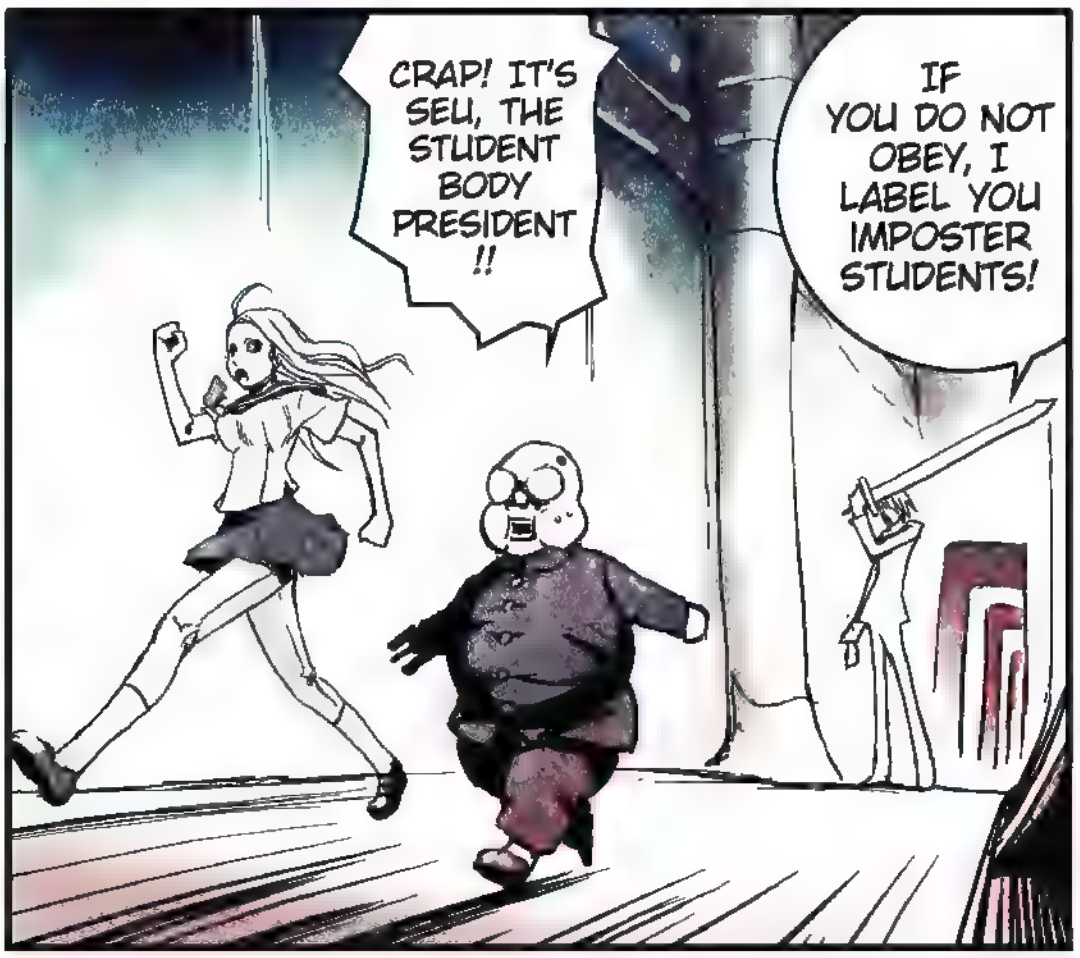
WHREEE

[illegible]


DOOM


CHING!
STOP RIGHT THERE!!

!!


CRAP! IT'S SEU, THE STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT !!
IF YOU DO NOT OBEY, I LABEL YOU IMPOSTER STUDENTS!

WAAA!

DADOOM

BROTHER GENITARIUS, I THINK WE SHOULD JUST STOP...

...YES, METAG-ENIE...

*SYMBOL: BLAME

04 BLAME ACADEMY! BENEATH THE SAKURA TOWER - END

05

PACKAGE

A PACKAGE ARRIVED FOR MY BROTHER.

BUT HE LEFT THE FAMILY FORTY YEARS AGO, AND WAS NEVER HEARD FROM SINCE.

I DECIDED TO VISIT THE HOSPITAL OF THE SENDER.

IT WAS ON THE VERY BOTTOM FLOOR OF A DISTANT SECTOR.

I'M GLAD THAT I'M SO GOOD WITH MY HANDS.

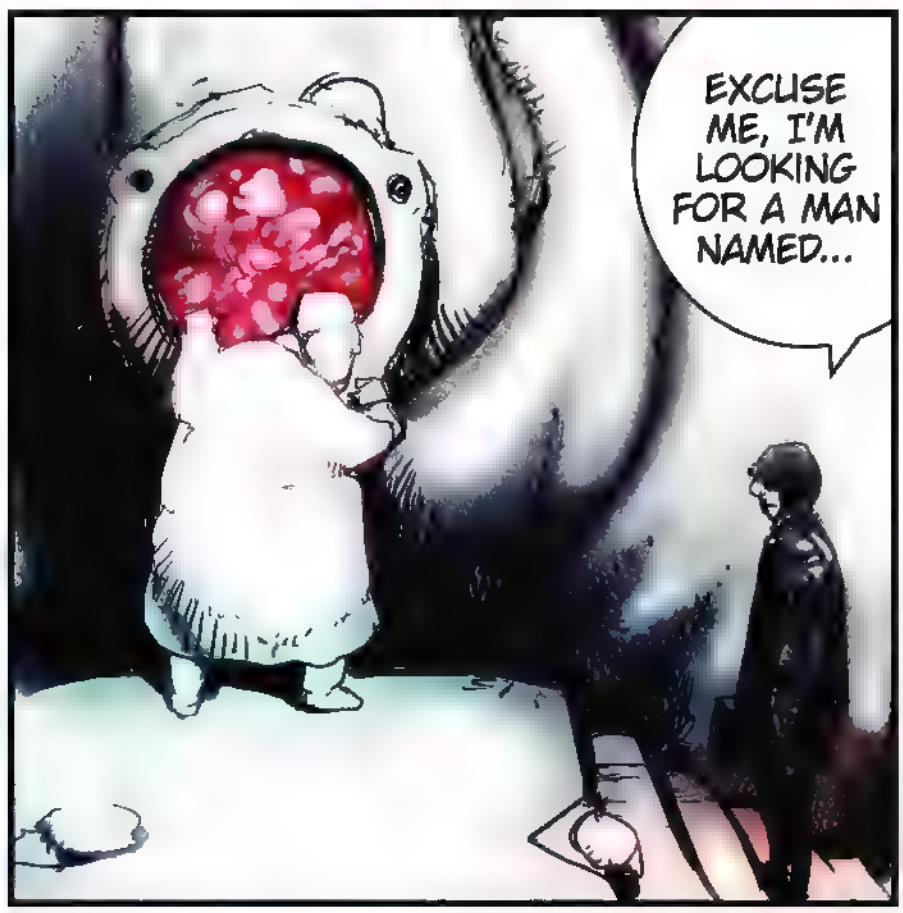
THE NURSE ONLY LET ME SEE MY BROTHER'S RECORDS AFTER I GAVE HER MY HANDCRAFTED FOUR-PIECE PENCIL-SHARPENER.

HE WORKED AT A FOOD DEVELOPMENT AGENCY, PIPING FOOD PASTE TO THE ENTIRE SECTOR.

WHAT A SPLENDID SYSTEM!!

*FOOD

AH, TAKING A TOUR?


EXCUSE ME, I'M LOOKING FOR A MAN NAMED...

THAT'S THE NAME OF OUR CELL-GROWTH DEVICE.

THERE WAS MY BROTHER.

05

PACKAGE - END

06

NETSPHERE ENGINEER

THE CITY IS MADE OF AN ACCUMULATION OF COUNTLESS FLOORS SEPARATED BY THE MEGASTRUCTURE. A MILLENNIUM AGO, THE UNSEEN MASTER LEFT THE CITY, AND ITS GUARDIANS NO LONGER SHOWED THEMSELVES. THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE CITY CARVED INTO THE MEGASTRUCTURE DISAPPEARED AS WELL.

AFTER THE FOURTEENTH VICTIM SHOWED UP, KIJIMA-SAN, WHO WAS BORN WITH THE GIFT OF FAR-SIGHT, SPOTTED AN EXTERMINATOR AROUND THE LOWEST LEVEL OF THE FUNGAL ARRAYS.

THEIR UNMOVING REMAINS WERE SPOTTED EVERY NOW AND THEN, BUT HE SAID THIS ONE LOOKED FRESHLY-MADE.

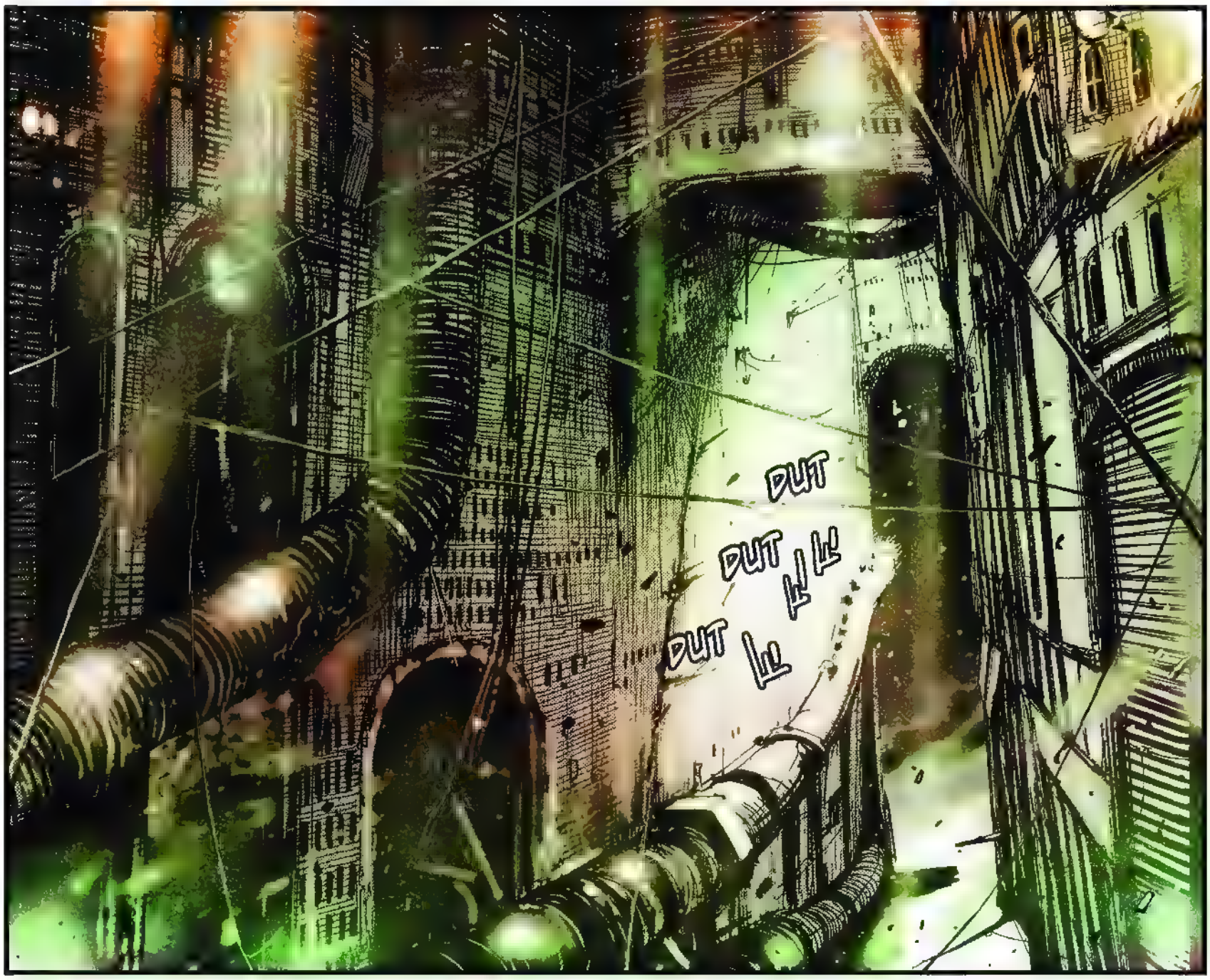
WHEN HIJIKAZE-SAN THE PREFECT WAS YOUNG, HE LIVED IN THE ROYAL CITY. HE WAS THE ONLY ONE IN THE COLONY WITH A COMMUNICATIONS IMPLANT.

AT THE TIME, THE PREFECT WAS RECEIVING LIFE-EXTENSION TREATMENT, WHICH MEANT HE KEPT GROWING.

ACCORDING TO LAW, SUCH AN OBJECT MUST BE HANDED OVER TO CENTRAL IF DISCOVERED.

SO ON THAT DAY, HE SENT A MESSAGE TO THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT.

IT IS CLEAR THAT THIS IS BEYOND OUR CAPABILITY.


DUT
DUT
DUT

GAAH

DUT DUT DUT DUT

ZZSH...

WE FOUND THE PLACE WHEN WE WERE SEARCHING FOR A NEW SOURCE OF WATER.

THAT'S WHERE THE EXTERMI-NATORS CAME FROM.

UP AHEAD.

WE WILL CONTINUE FROM HERE.

YOUR HELP IS APPRE-CIATED.

DOOM

ドオオ

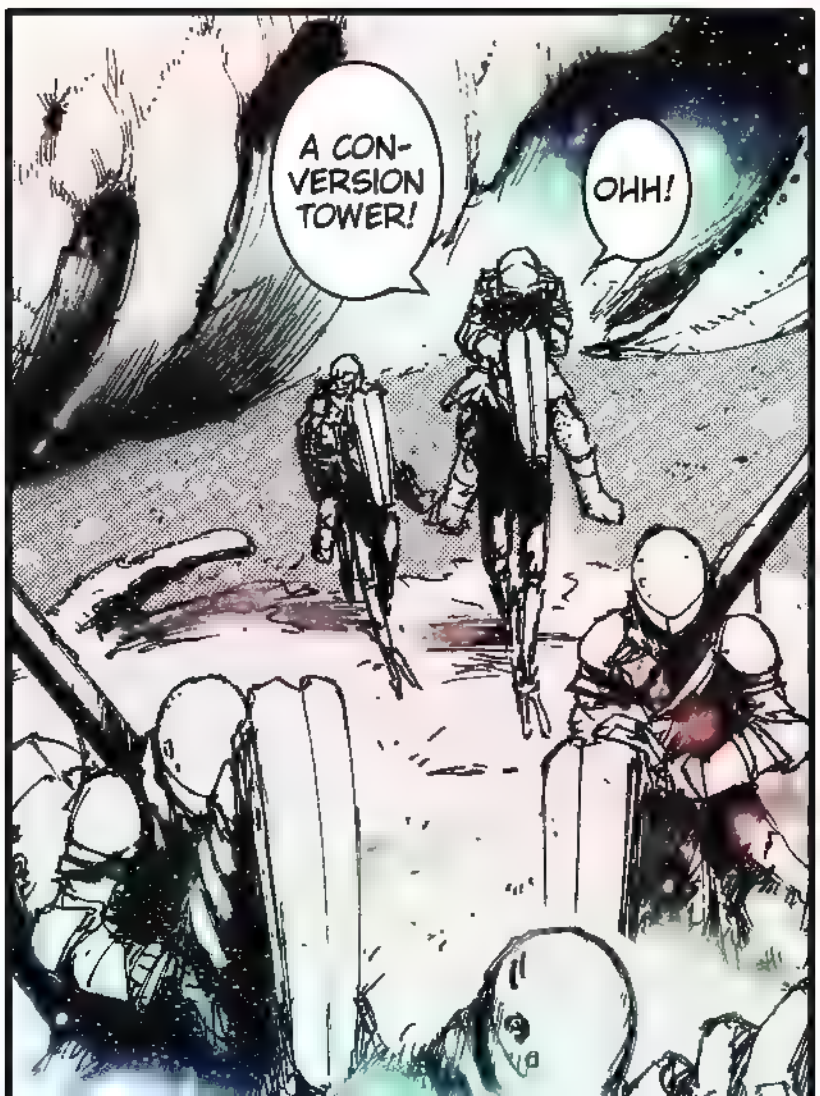
GONK

ゴッ

GSHUNK

ガ"=ノヤ

A BUILDER. IT DOESN'T DO ANY-THING TO HUMANS DIRECTLY, BUT DON'T STARE TOO LONG.
WHAT IS THAT?!


A CON-VERSION TOWER!
OHH!

ゴゴゴゴゴ

VUVUVUM

THIS CONVERSION TOWER IS ALIVE!!

THIS IS A MAJOR DISCOVERY !!

IT'S CHARGING...

THAT'S MY GUESS.

SHOULD WE SUPPOSE THAT THE EXTERMINATORS WHO ATTACKED THAT COLONY CAME FROM THIS TOWER?

IT'S ALL RIGHT, SIR DENKO! WE SHALL STRIKE DOWN WHATEVER INFERNAL TERROR HADES SENDS OUR WAY!

WHAT?!

DENKO, MAKE THE TOWER PRODUCE AN EXTERMINATOR. I WANT TO TAKE IT ALIVE.

WE CAN'T GO BACK TO THE ROYAL CITY WITHOUT PROOF.

VWUH

THE BLUE LIGHT IS BLINKING ...

PRODUCE AN EXTERMINATOR? I'VE NEVER EVEN SEEN AN ACTIVE CONVERSION TOWER.

FSHK

IT TURNED RED.

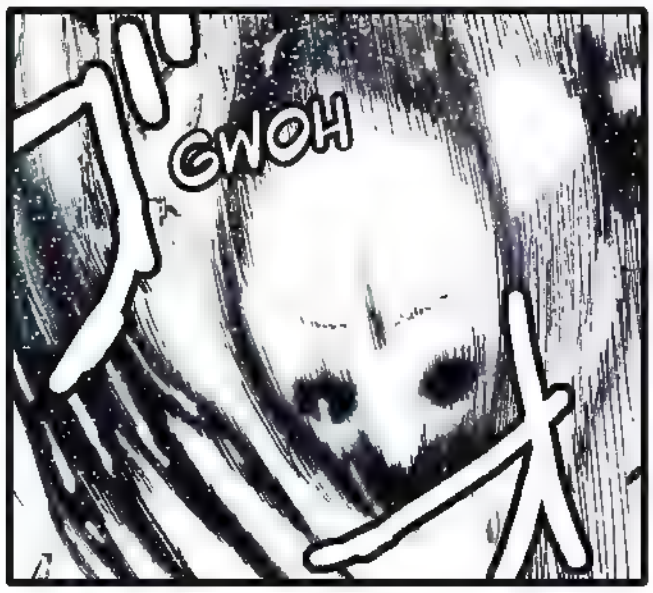
PLIP

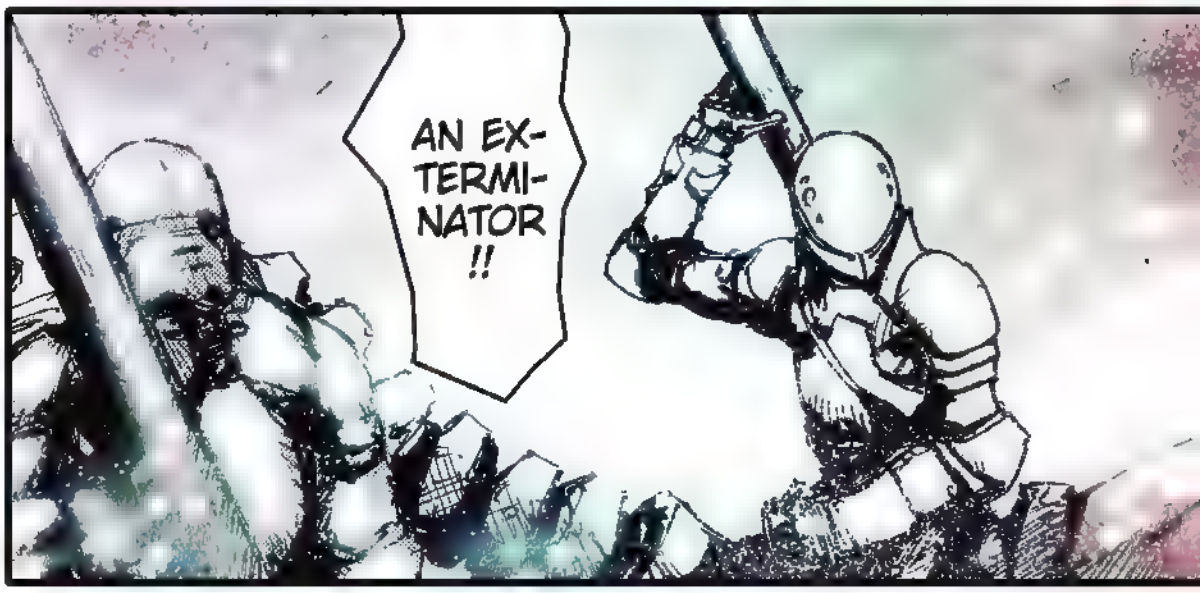
WHA
...

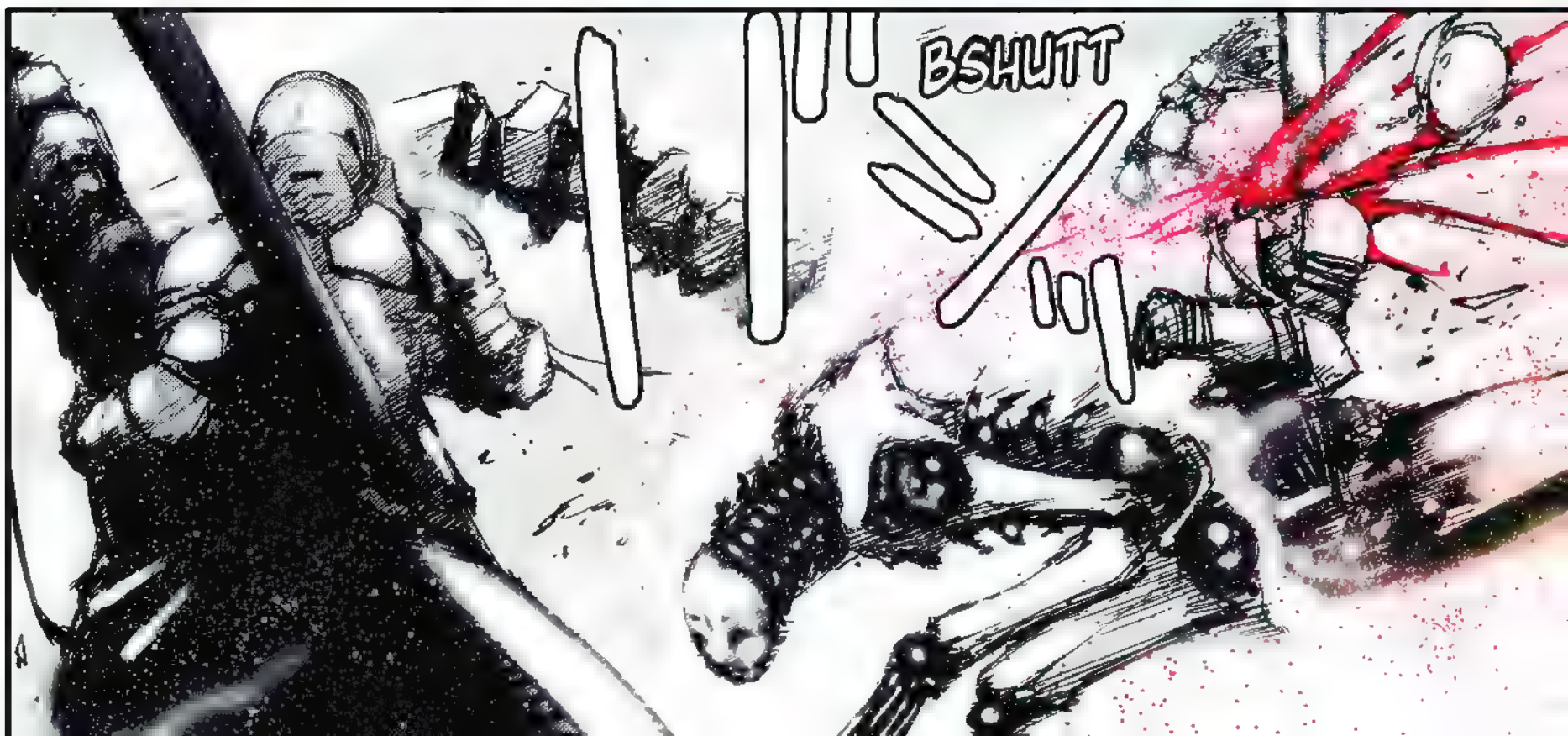
BLAD

TIK

TING


GWOH


AN EX-
TERMI-
NATOR
!!


BSHUTT

AAAAH...

!!

GCHING

BSHUM

GCHAK

KANG

VVVMMM

DSHAAA

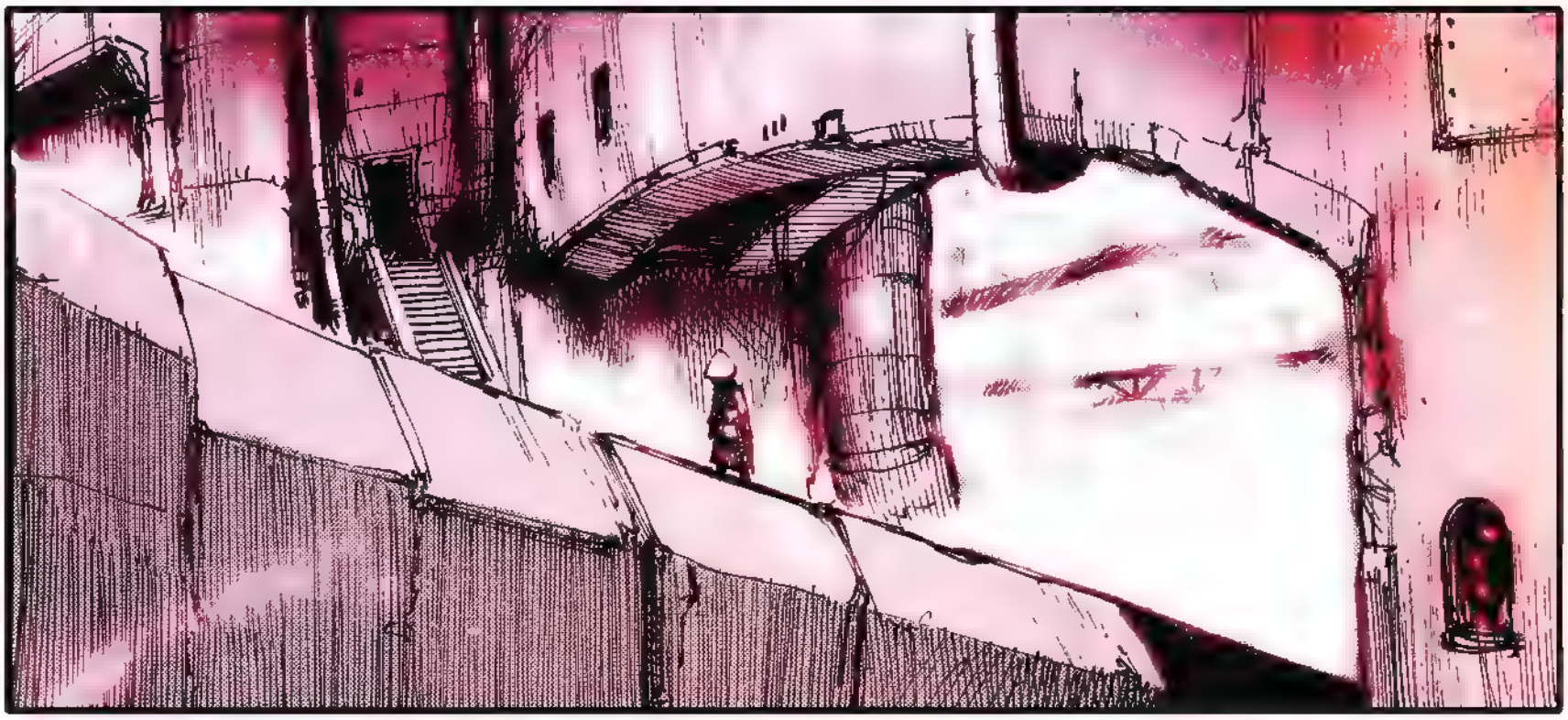
THE TOWER'S ACTING!!

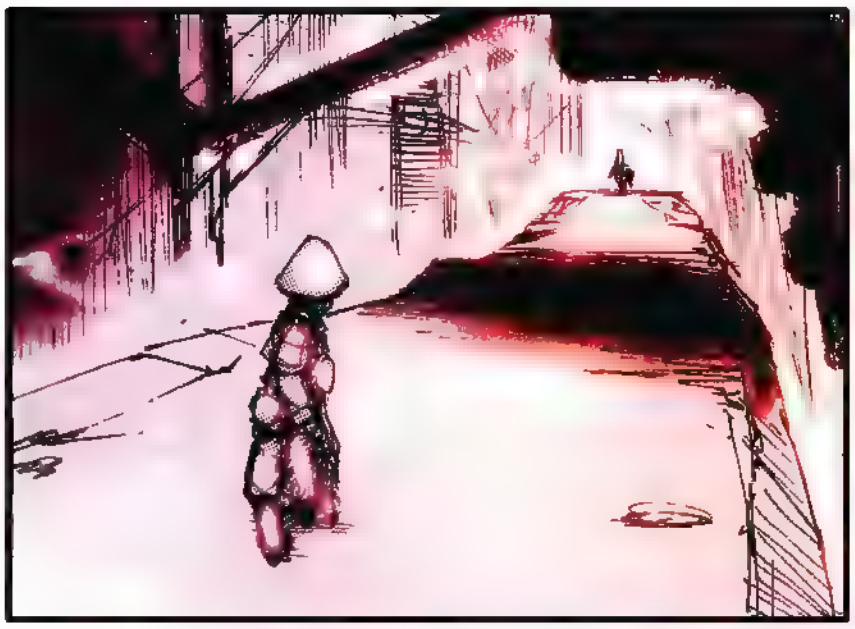
GRURR

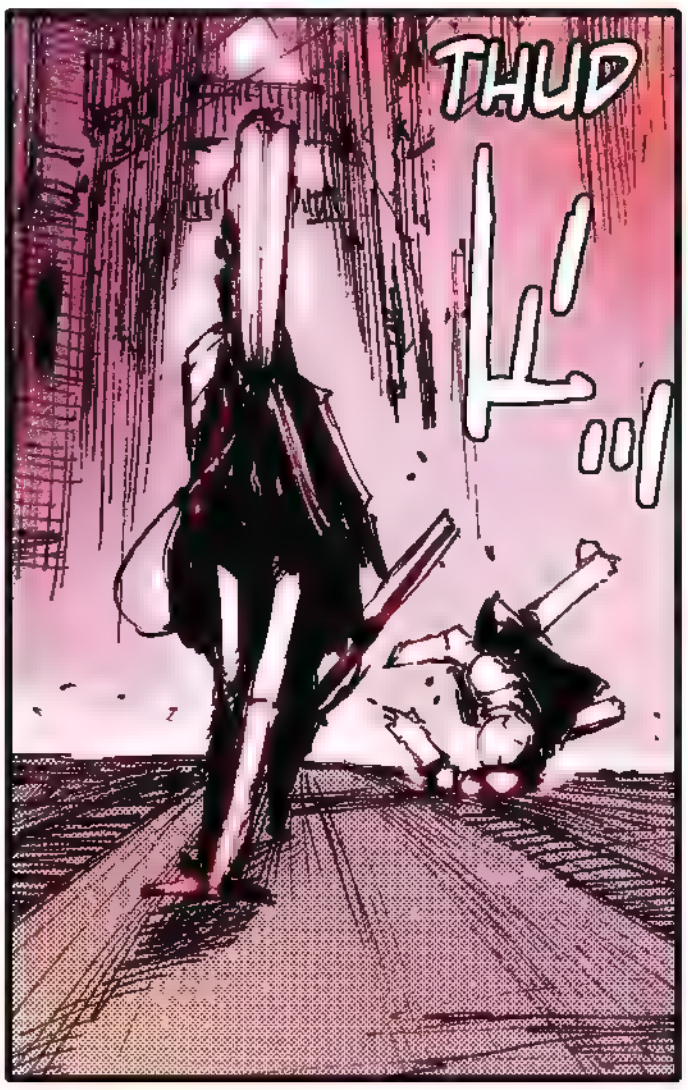
SHWUUU

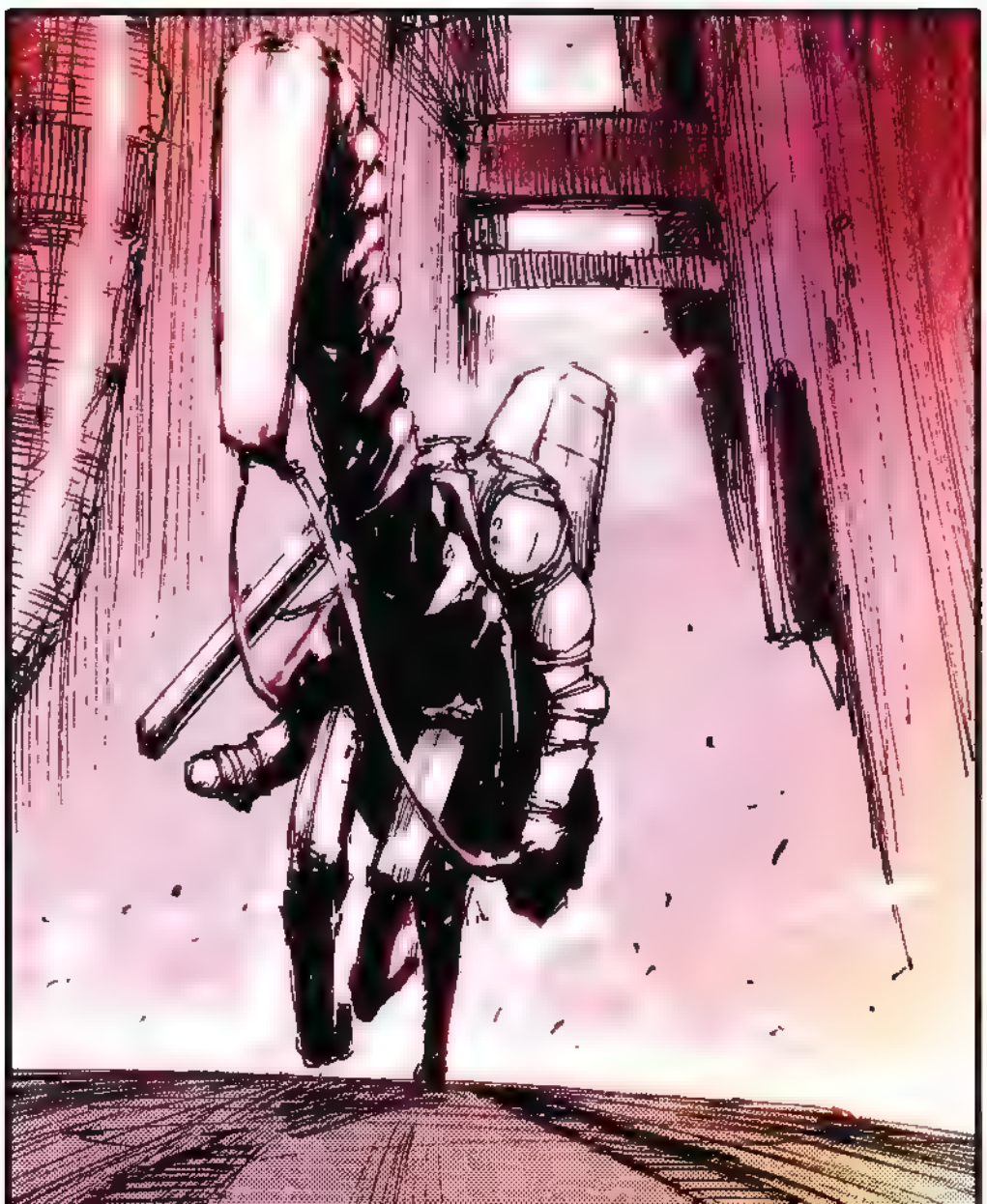
GIGI

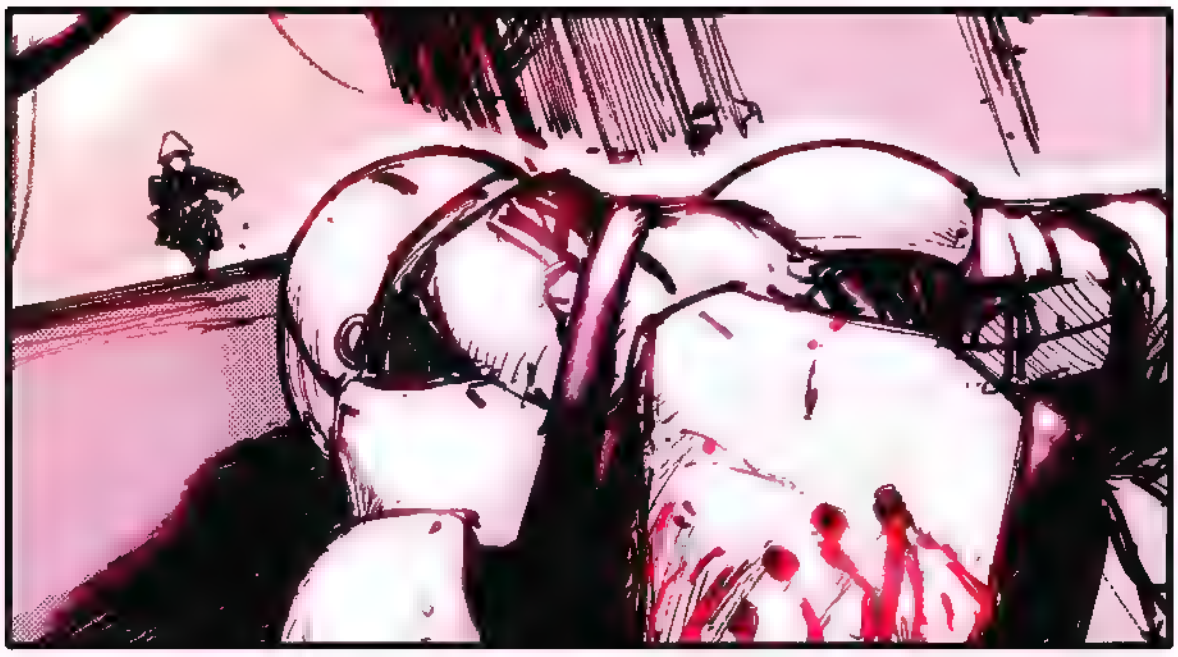
GI

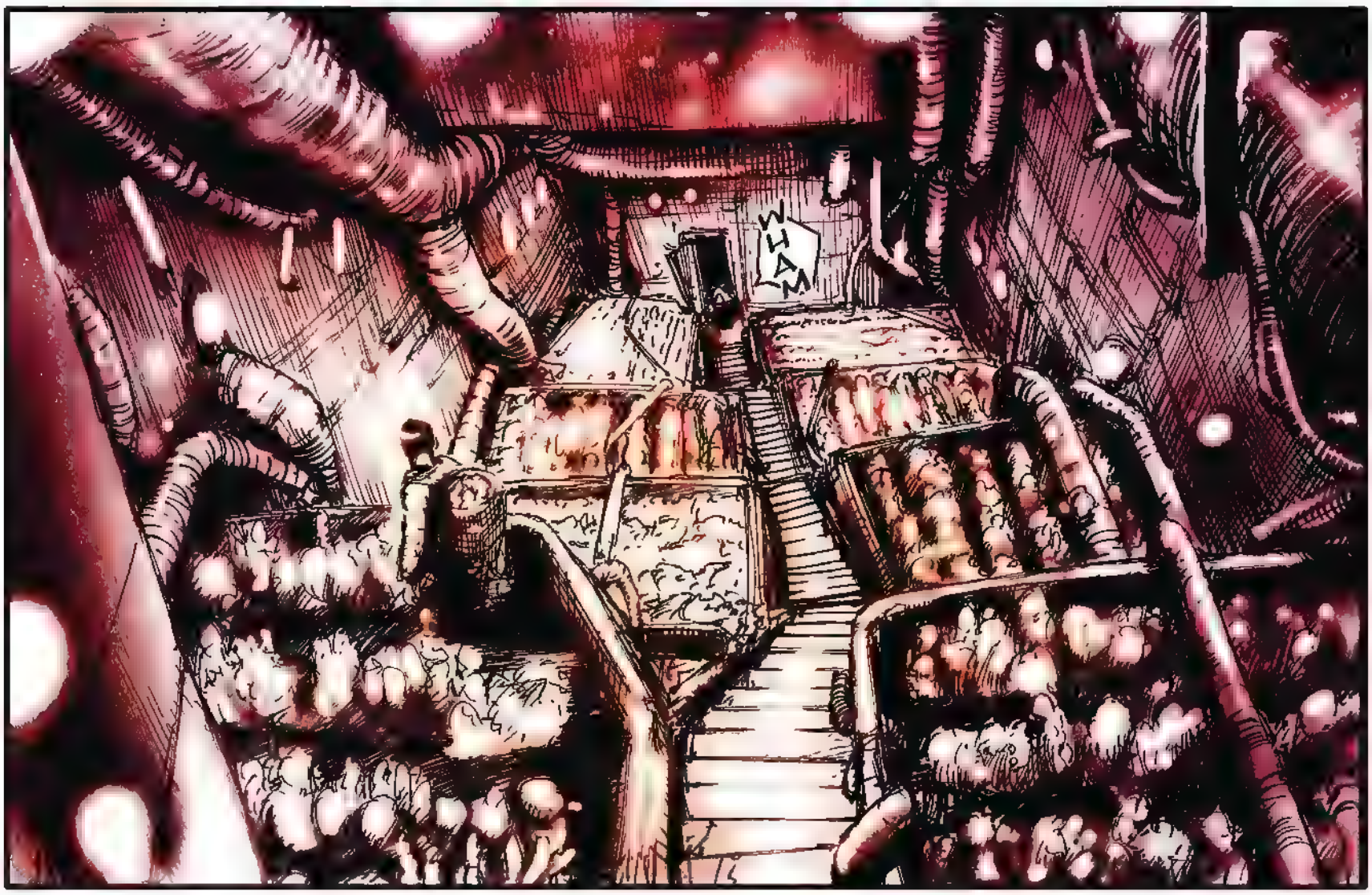




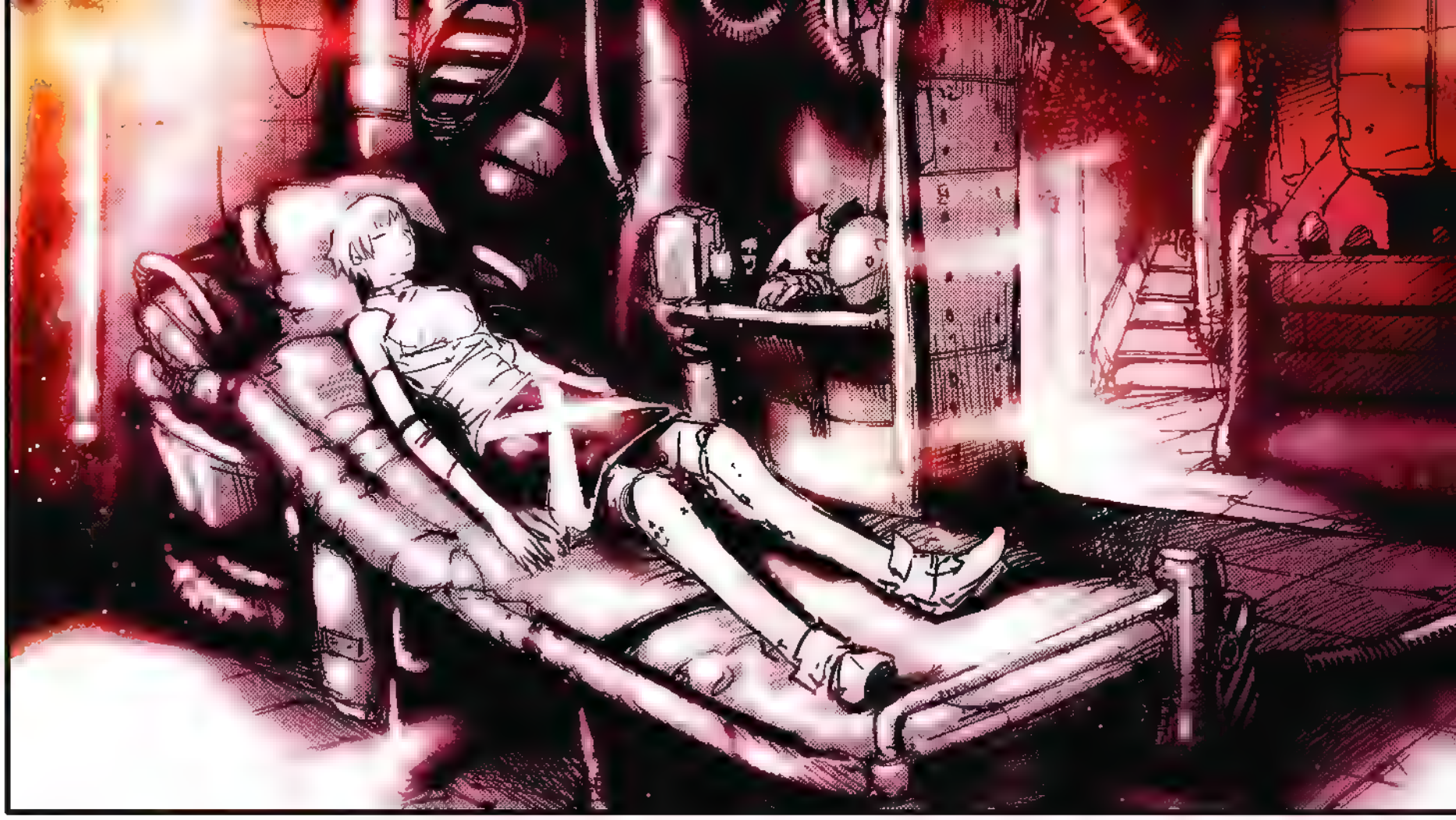

THUD

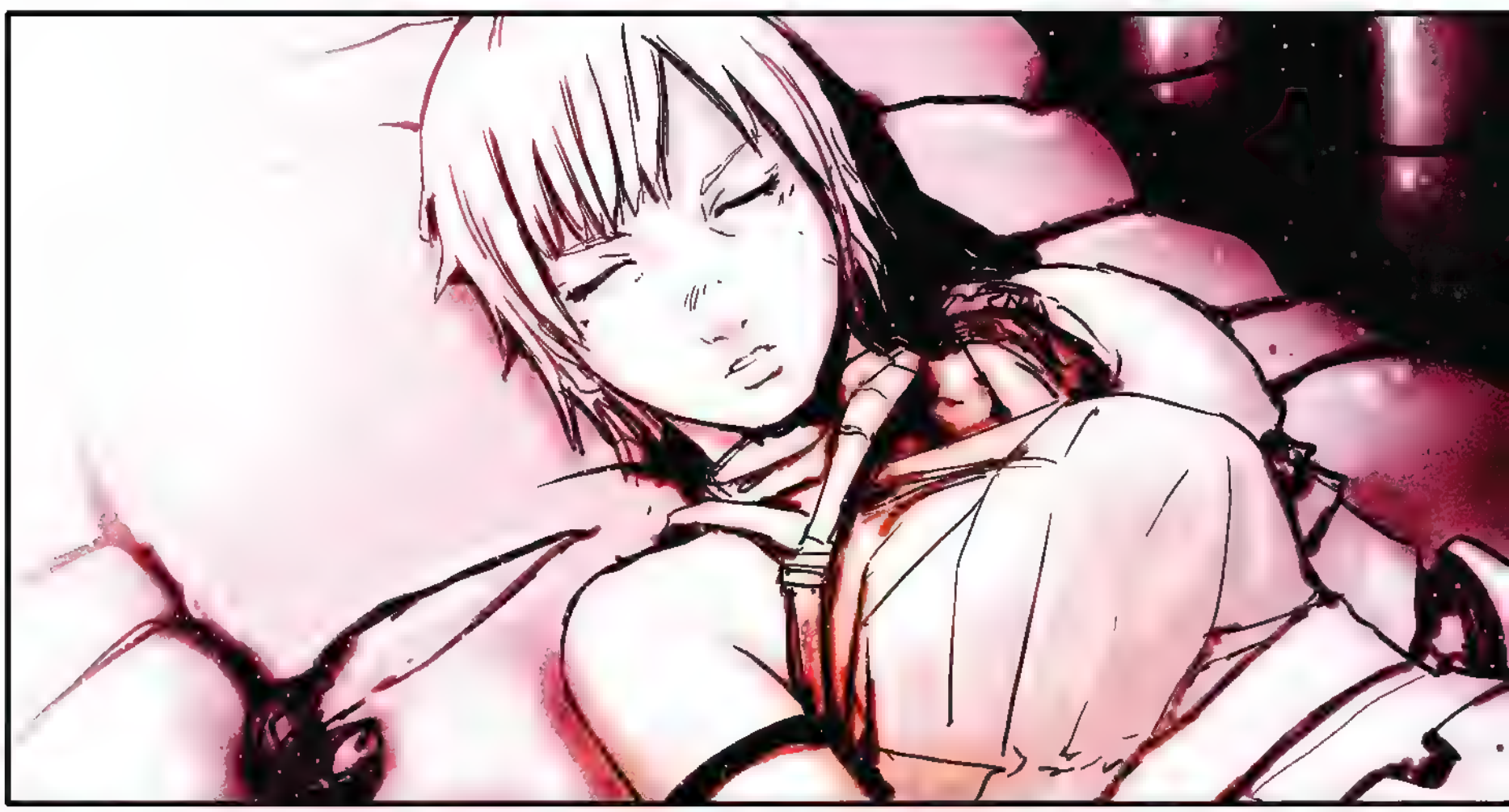


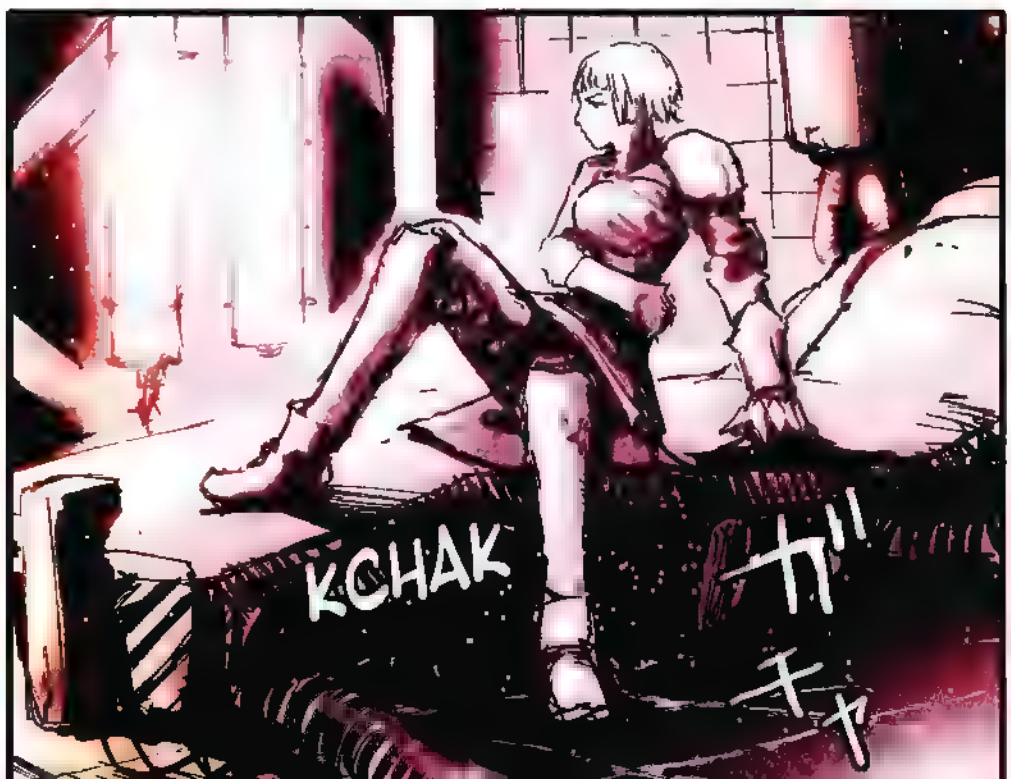


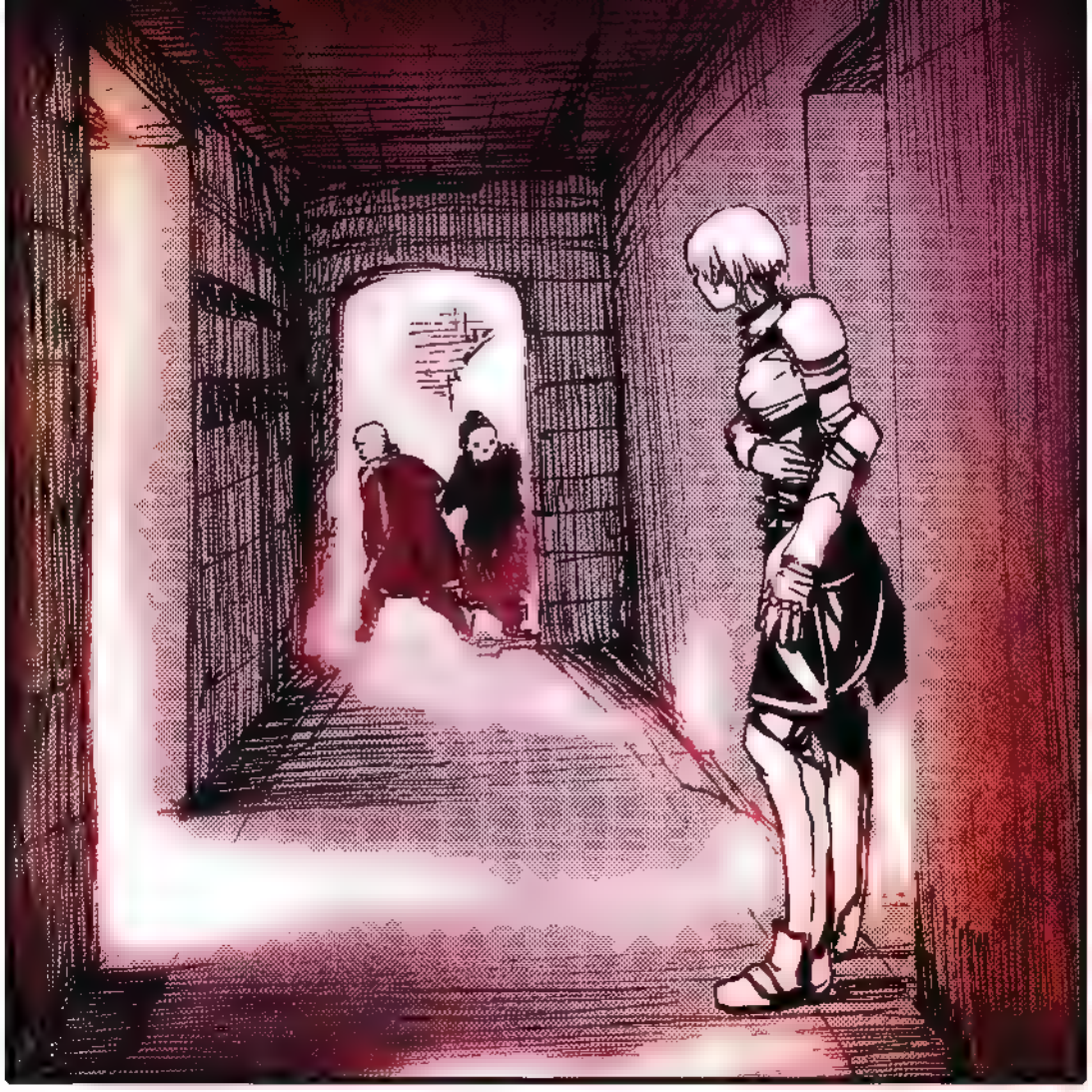

WHAM

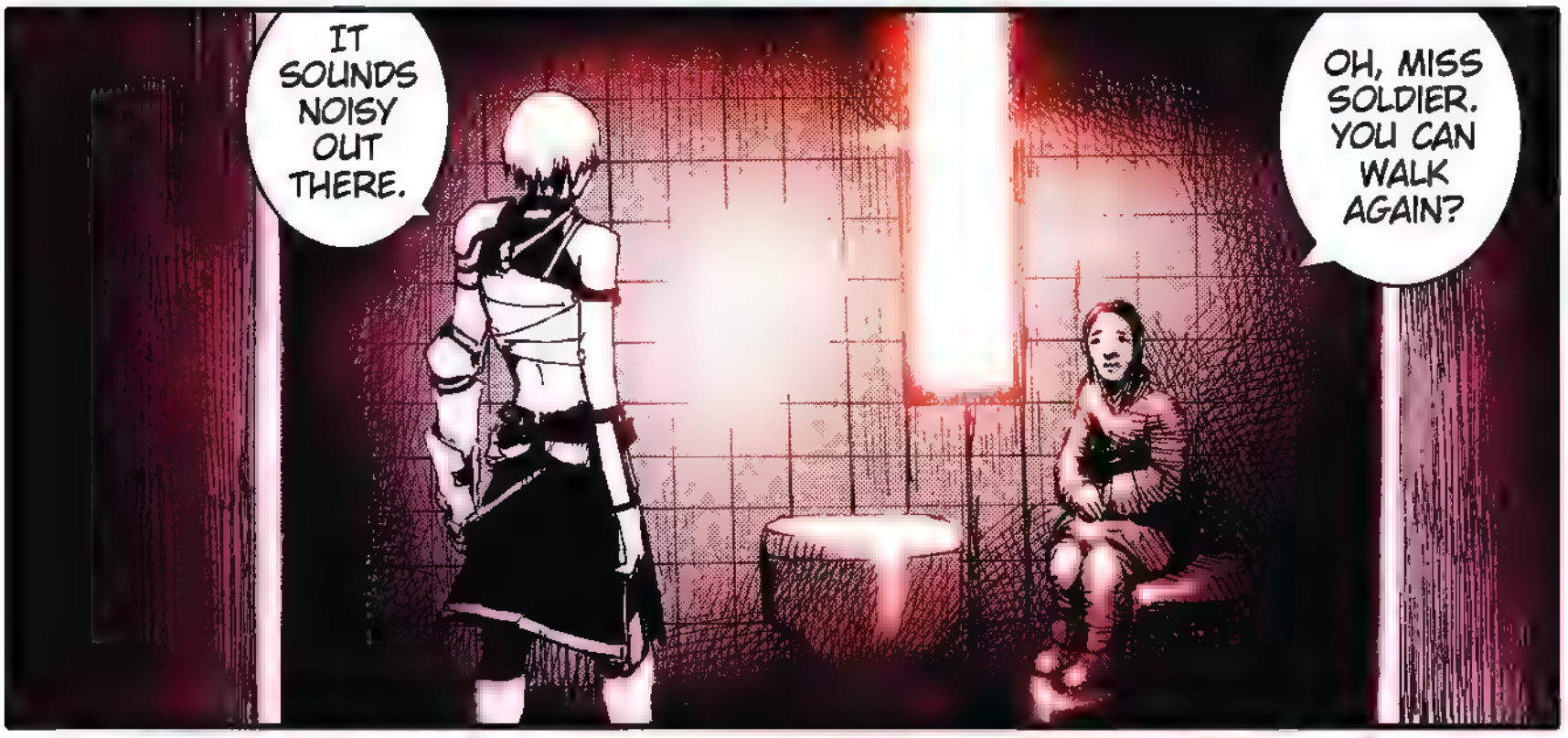
COME QUICK!

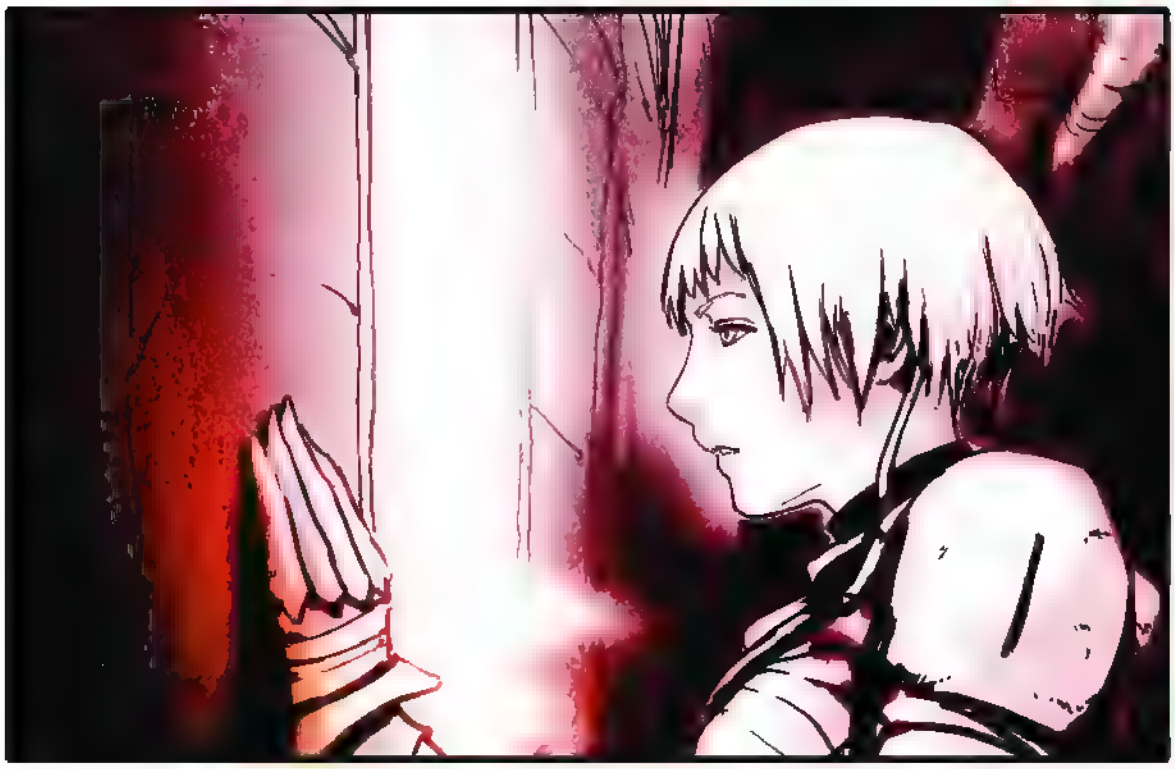


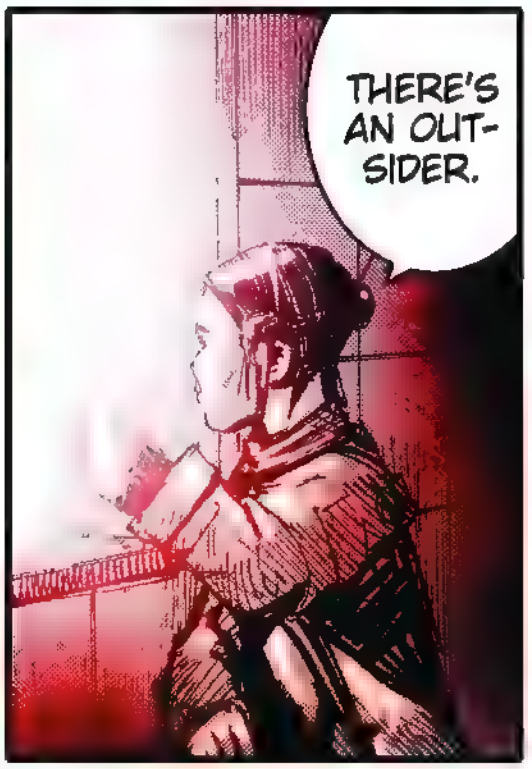



KCHAK
カ!!
キャ

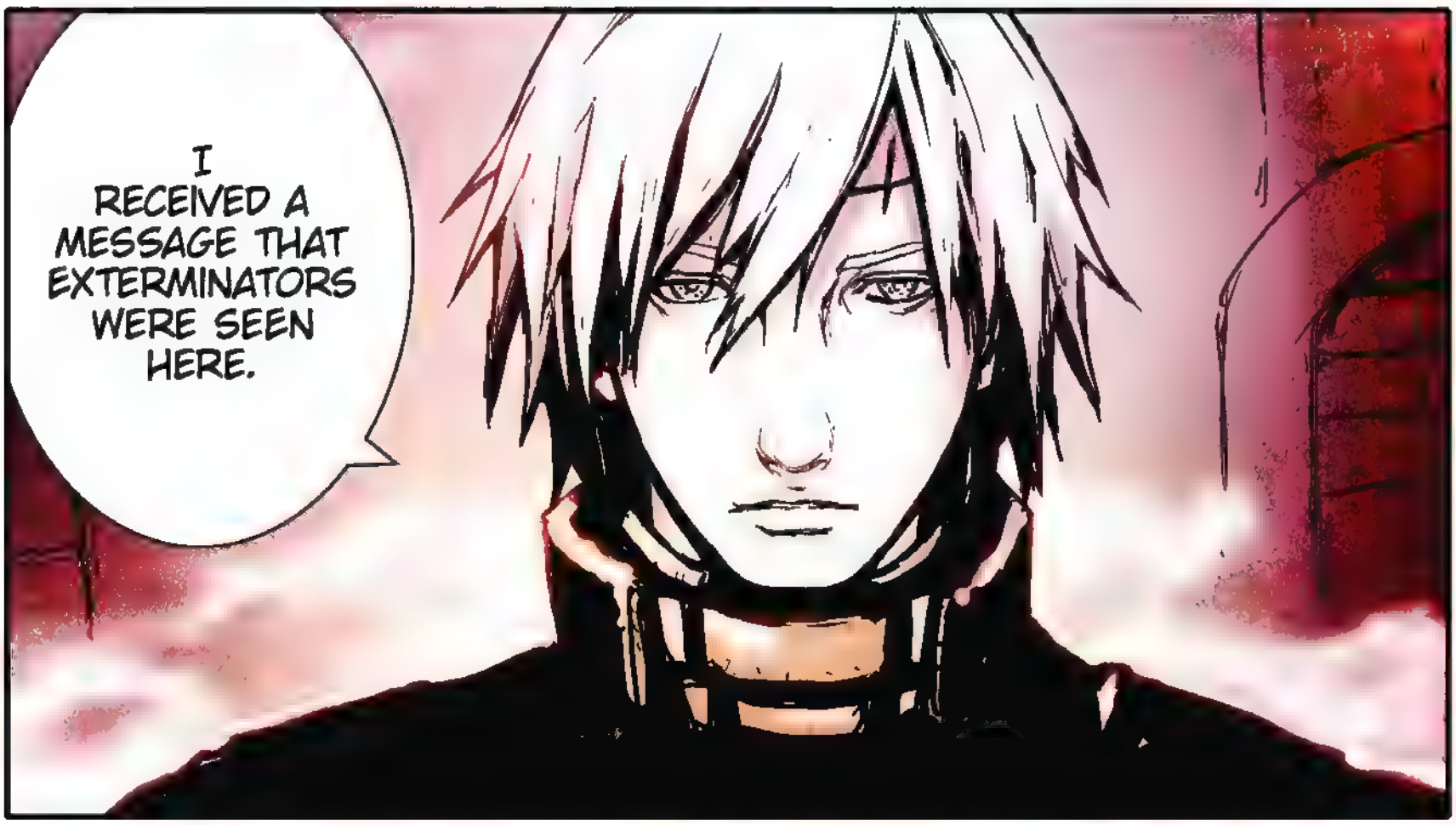


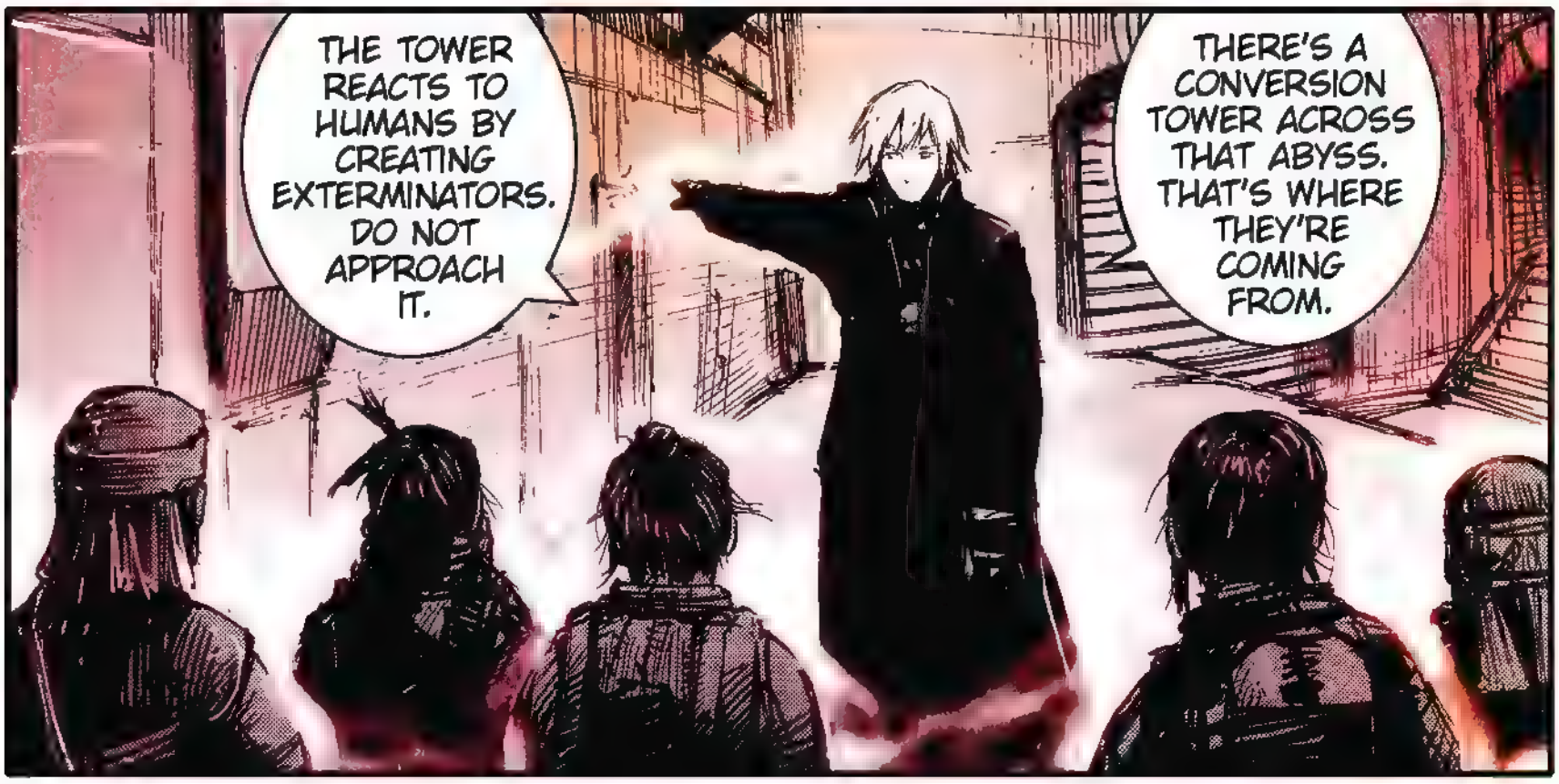

IT SOUNDS NOISY OUT THERE.
OH, MISS SOLDIER. YOU CAN WALK AGAIN?




THERE'S AN OUT-SIDER.

WELL, WELL... WHO ARE YOU?


I RECEIVED A MESSAGE THAT EXTERMINATORS WERE SEEN HERE.


THE TOWER REACTS TO HUMANS BY CREATING EXTERMINATORS. DO NOT APPROACH IT.
THERE'S A CONVERSION TOWER ACROSS THAT ABYSS. THAT'S WHERE THEY'RE COMING FROM.

ZSH

WAIT!!

MAKE SURE THAT NO ONE LEAVES THIS PLACE FOR A WHILE.

I'M GOING TO DISMANTLE THE TOWER NOW.

WHO ARE YOU?!

DISMANTLE IT?!

A DISMANTLER.

YOU ARE FORBIDDEN TO ACT WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION!

THIS ENTIRE FLOOR IS THE DOMAIN OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT!!

WELL, YOU *DO* HAVE RATHER FANCY GEAR.

THERE'S A GOVERNMENT ON THIS FLOOR?

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT?

I'VE SEEN COUNTLESS FLOORS THAT GOT WIPED OUT FOR TAMPERING WITH THE RELICS OF THE CITY.

IF YOU'RE PLOTTING TO USE THAT TOWER, THINK AGAIN.

TREASURE THE CIVILIZATION YOU'VE DEVEL-OPED.

DON'T MESS WITH THE REMNANTS OF THE NET-SPHERE.

...

WHO DO YOU THINK YOU ARE...?

CHK

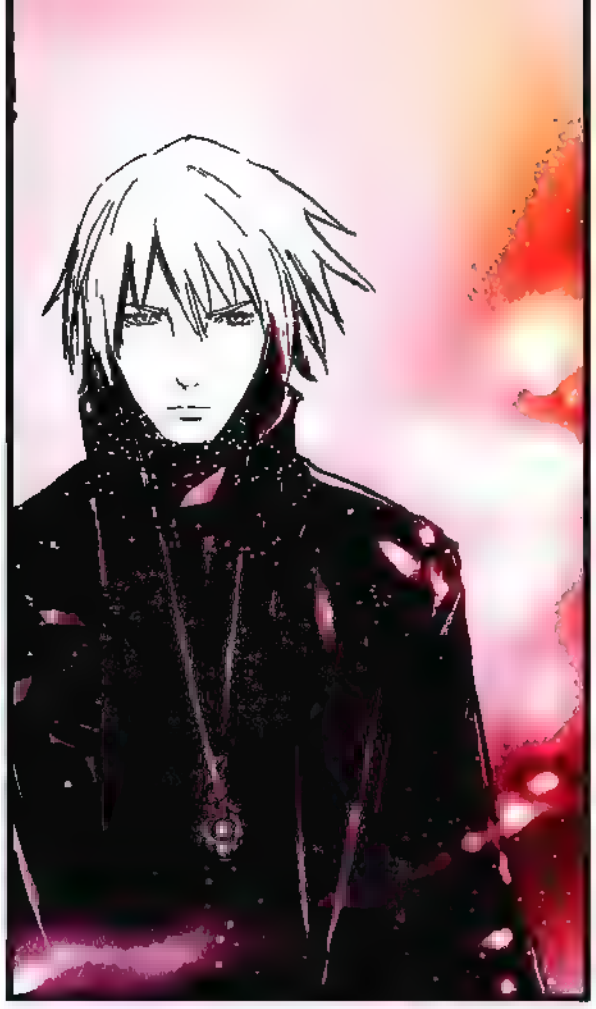
YOU THERE! STOP WHERE YOU ARE!!

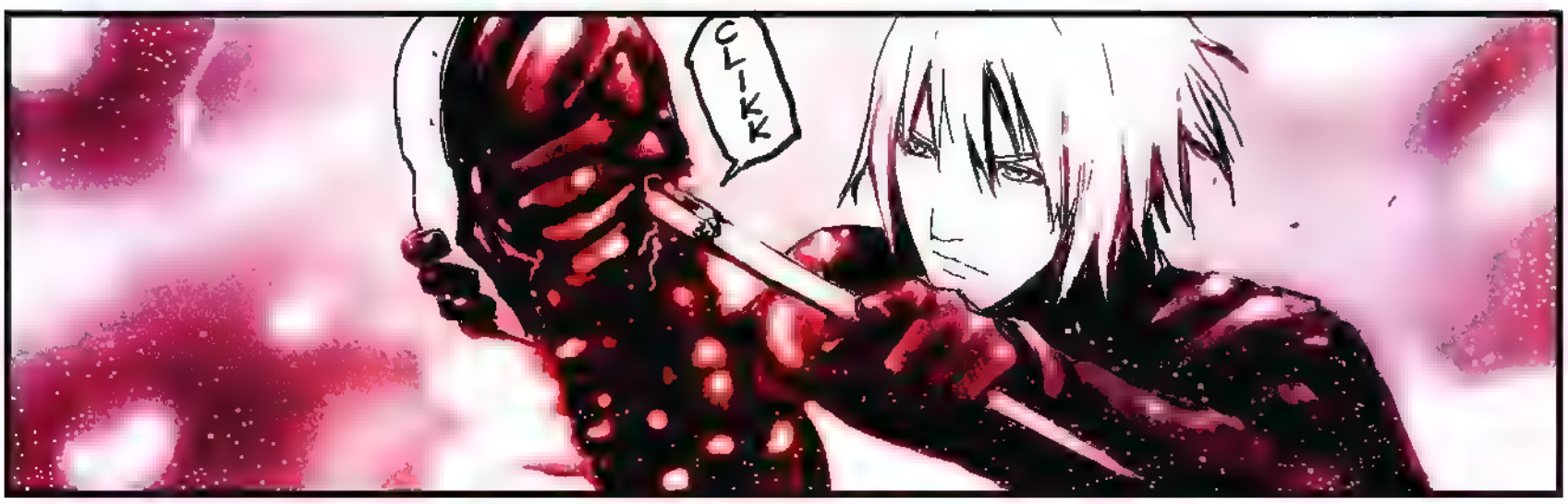
KTHUNK

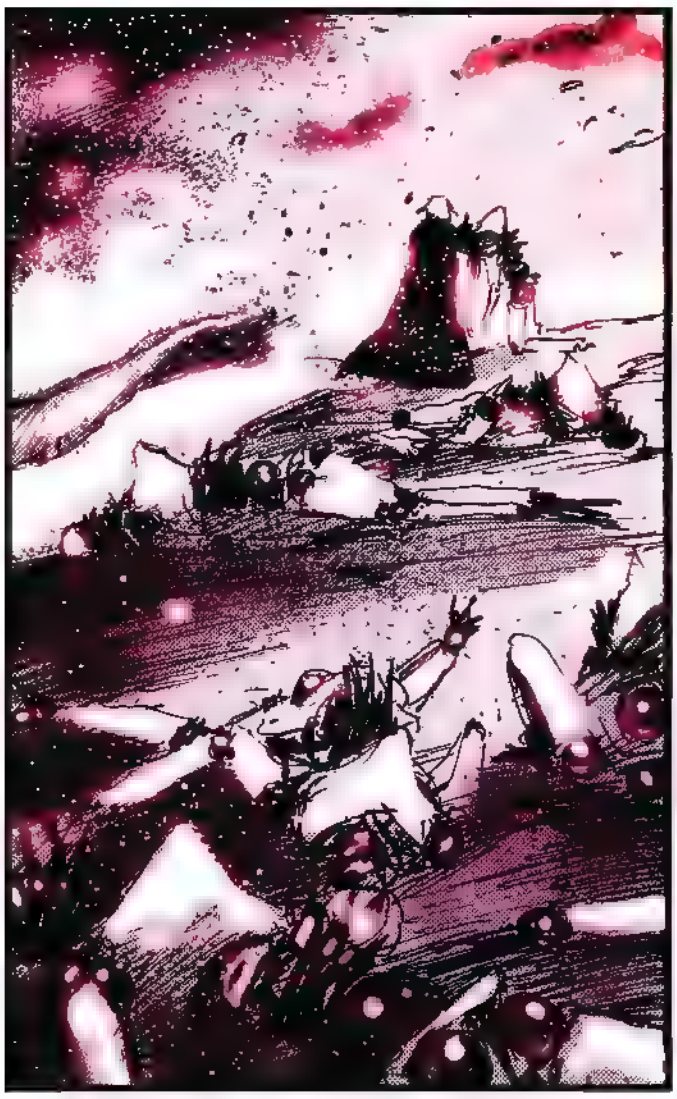
BLIP

BLIP

IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO BELIEVE THAT SOMEONE CAME FROM A DIFFERENT FLOOR. THE MEGASTRUCTURE WAS SO TOUGH AND THICK THAT NO HOLE COULD BE PUNCHED INTO IT, AND THERE WERE NO PASSAGES THROUGH.




CLIK



SHH
ス…

KWUNK

ZRD...

GONG

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH !

THE CONVER-SION TOWER HAS SPOTTED YOU.

...

KAK

SHUP

SILENCE !!!

ZZAKK

VVVM

GCHUNK

DOOOM

AGH...

ZZTT

ギギギ

PUT THIS ON. IF YOU'RE LUCKY, YOU JUST MIGHT SURVIVE...

WHAT DID YOU DO?!

BSHAK

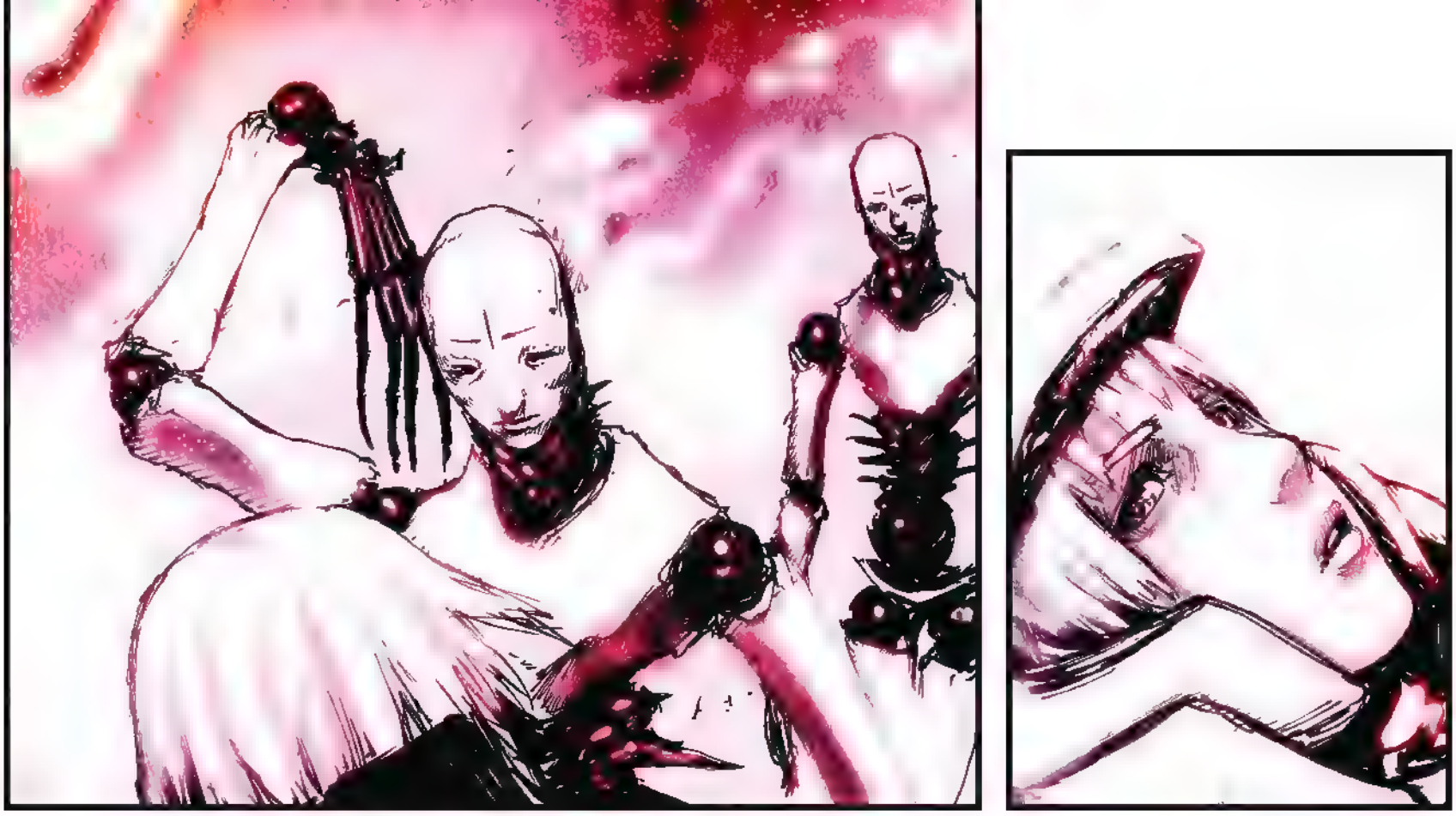
MY ARMOR WON'T MOVE!!

...?!

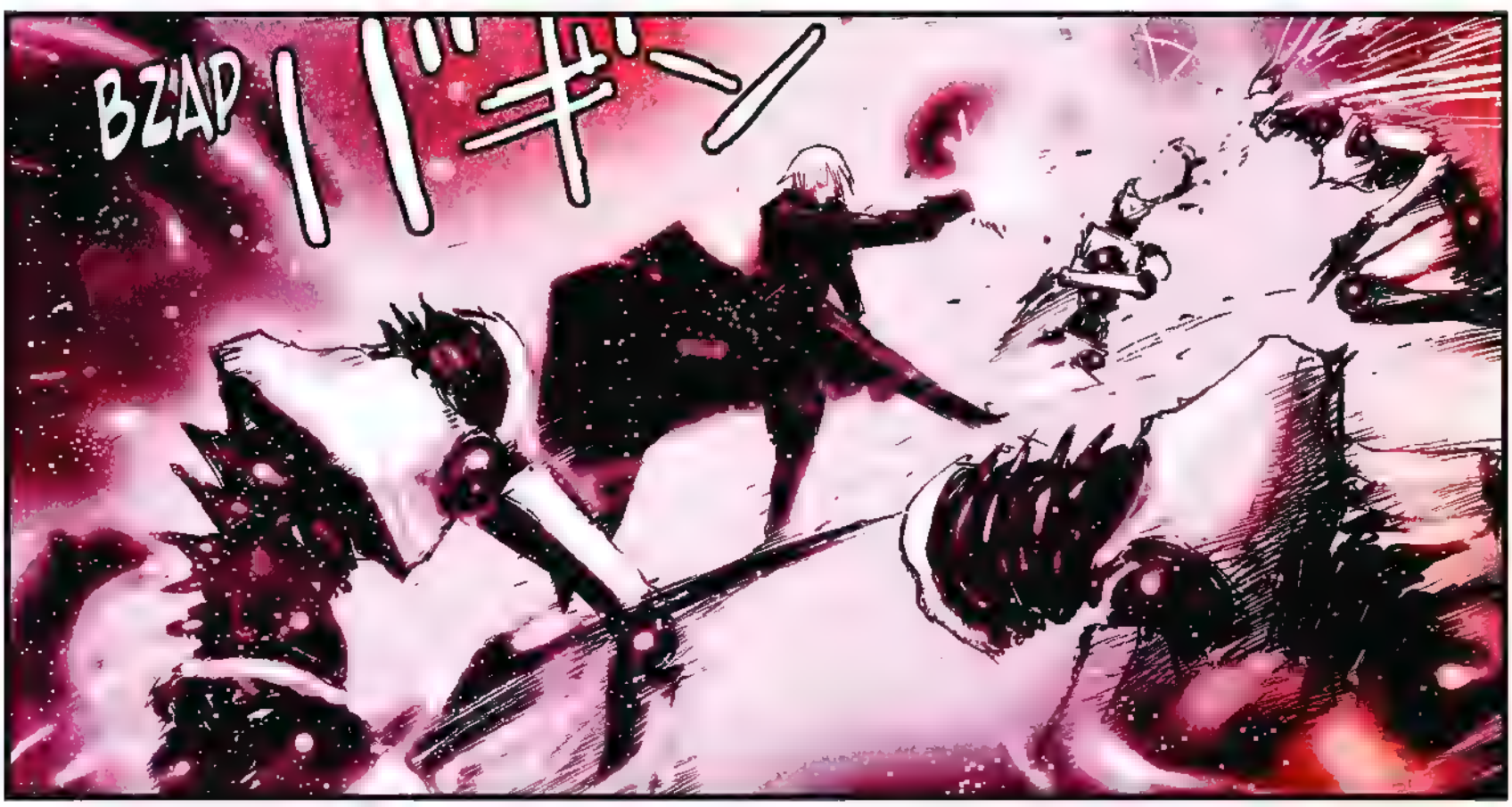
?

DON'T BOTHER TALKING.

DON'T MOVE FROM THAT SPOT.



BLAM


BZAP

DSHOOOM

GLURSH

HUP

SHUDD-

WHAM WHAM

FWUMP

KSHUK

KLAKK

WHUMMMM

SHWOOOO

DON'T TAKE IT OFF!!

CLANG

GREEEEE

BCHING

GING

GING

BLAM

BLAM

BLAM

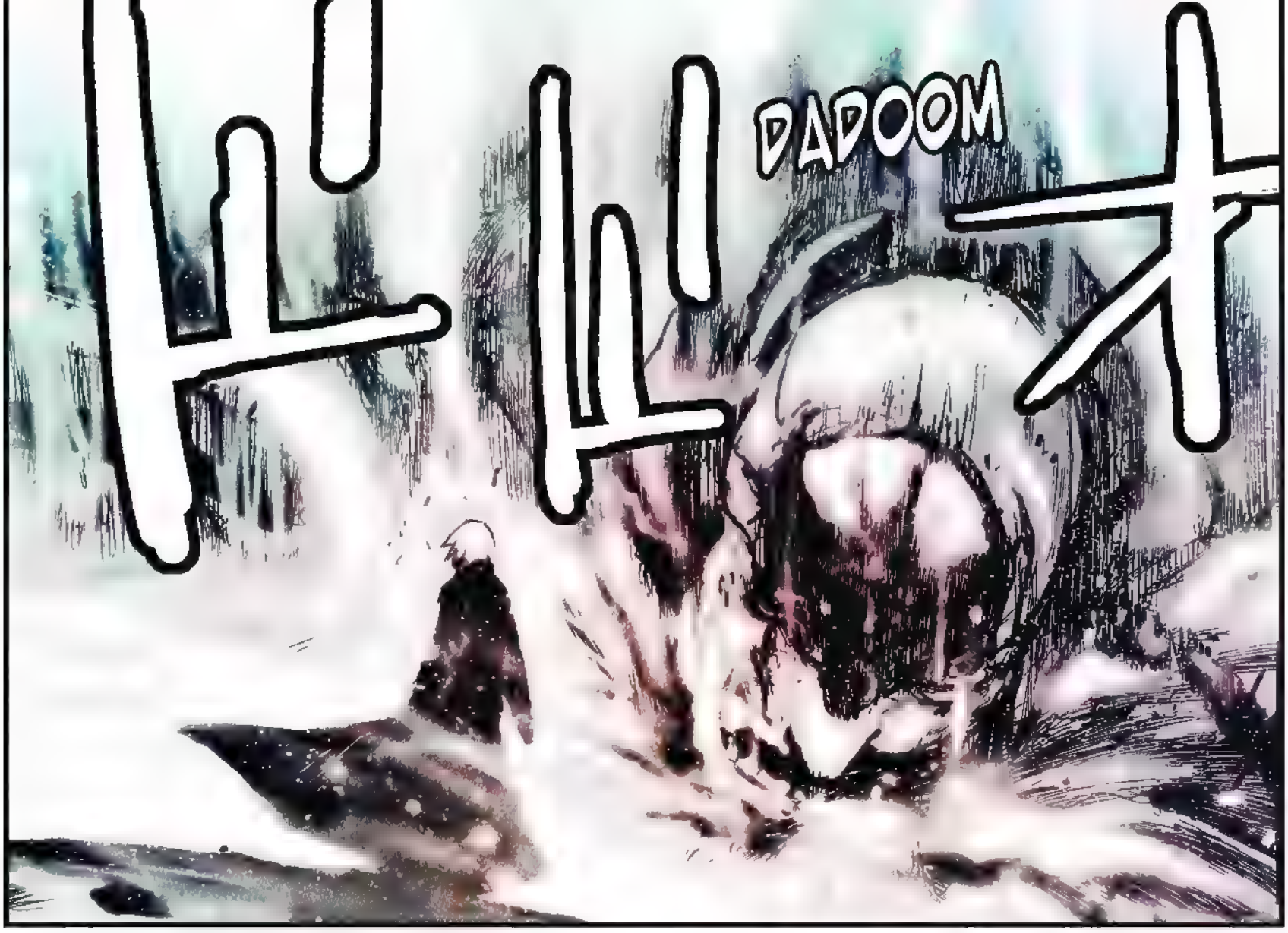
DOGAK

GAK

GAK

GAK

BCHING
BCHING
BCHING
GAK
GAK
GAK
GAK
GAK
GAK


DADOOM

I DO NOT KNOW WHAT HAPPENED IN THAT FOREBODING PLACE, BUT WITH THE TOWER DISMANTLED, THE EXTERMINATORS NO LONGER APPEARED.

A FEW YEARS LATER, THE RUMOR WAS THAT THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT HAD FOUND AN ENTRANCE OF SORTS INTO THE MEGASTRUCTURE, BUT NO ONE WAS ABLE TO FIND OUT HOW TO OPEN IT.

06

NETSPHERE ENGINEER - END

07

PUMP

THE UNCEASING RED SKY IS CAUSED BY A TRANSPARENT FILM IN THE ATMOSPHERE. THE FILM IS MADE FROM FLOATING TREES WITH RED SAP. THIS WORLD'S ECOSYSTEM IS MAINTAINED BY JUST 37 SPECIES OF PLANT, WITH THE ONLY SURVIVING ANIMALS BEING FOUR TYPES OF INSECT, AND HUMANITY--THE LAST MAMMAL ON THE PLANET, ON THE VERGE OF EXTINCTION.

WHOOOSH ㄷ_ㅅㅅㅅㅅ

IN THIS ERA, HUMAN WOMEN GIVE BIRTH TO BETWEEN 100 AND 150 CHILDREN, EACH ABOUT FIVE MILLIMETERS IN SIZE, WITHOUT REALIZING IT.

FEMALES MAKE UP ONLY TEN PERCENT OF THE BROOD, BUT THEY GROW MUCH FASTER, AND EAT THE MALES FOR SUSTENANCE.

AFTER BIRTH, THE BABIES EAT THE MOTHER'S WASTE TO GROW.

BY THIS STAGE, THE MALES SEPARATE INTO TWO OR THREE GROUPS THAT ACT SEPARATELY FROM THE FEMALES.

THEIR MAIN SOURCE OF FOOD IS THE MOSS THAT GROWS ON THE EXPOSED ROOTS OF CERTAIN PLANTS, BUT IT IS NOT PLENTIFUL.

MANY GROUPS DIE OUT WITHOUT EVER FINDING A SOURCE OF FOOD.

FSHHHH

OVER THE TWO MONTHS IT HAS SURVIVED, THIS GROUP HAS LOST OVER HALF ITS NUMBER TO STARVATION, DISEASE, AND ACCIDENTS.

THEY HAVE NO WAY OF KNOWING THAT THEIR SHELTER FROM THE STORM WAS LEFT BEHIND BY THEIR DISTANT ANCESTORS.

IT IS A LARVA OF THE CADDISFLIES THAT LIVE AT THE TOPS OF THE FLOATING TREES.

THEY ENCOUNTER A GIFT FROM THE SKY.

BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY ONES TO DETECT THE SUDDEN PRESENCE OF FOOD.

IT IS A MIRACLE THAT ANY OF THEM SURVIVED THE ATTACK OF THE TIN-ROACHES.

THEY HAVE JUST CAUGHT THE SCENT OF A FEMALE IN THE FAR DISTANCE.

ONLY TWO OF THIS GROUP HAVE SUR-VIVED AN ENTIRE YEAR TO ADULT-HOOD.

ONE FELL WHILE CLIMBING HER LEG, AND WAS CRUSHED.

BUT THE OTHER SUCCEEDED IN HANGING ON, AND SUCCESS-FULLY FUSED WITH THE FEMALE.

OTHER MALES HAD DONE SO ALREADY, BUT THAT COULDN'T BE HELPED.

WITH HIS VEINS FUSED AND NUTRIENTS ACQUIRED, HIS RE-PRODUCTIVE CELLS GREW EXPLOSIVELY. WITHIN THREE MINUTES HE HAD GROWN A SCROTUM, AND HIS UNNEEDED BRAIN AND ORGANS WERE DISSOLVED AWAY.

NOW NOTHING MORE THAN A HANGING SCROTUM, THE MAN COULD NO LONGER THINK OR FEEL, BUT HE WAS VERY, VERY FORTUNATE.

07

PUMP - END

08

BLAME!
EIGHTH-GENERATION PCELL'S MEGASTRUCTURE ESCAPE CHRONICLE

I HAVE BEEN ON A JOURNEY IN SEARCH OF THIS PLACE, WHICH HAS BEEN LEFT UNTOUCHED THROUGH SOME WHIM OF THE BUILDERS.

A MASSIVE, ANCIENT HOLLOW TORN INTO THE MEGA-STRUCTURE, ONCE SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE PASSAGE OF THE LEGEND-ARY CALAMITY "KILLY"...

WHOOOSH

...THAT WOULD MEAN THE CITY ITSELF IS NOT AN ENDLESSLY REPEATING STRUCTURE, BUT, IN FACT, HAS AN "END"...

AND IF THIS KILLY TRULY EXISTED...

AT SOME POINT I HAD WANDERED INTO A HUMAN SETTLEMENT WITHOUT REALIZING IT.

I WAS CARE-LESS. IT HAD BEEN AGES SINCE I LAST SAW A HUMAN.

OH, DAMN. THIS LOOKS LIKE...

BOOM

MY BILLION-SECOND-LONG JUVENESCENT PERIOD BACK HOME FELT LIKE MERELY THE BLINK OF AN EYE IN COMPARI-SON...

IT WAS A VERY LONG JOURNEY ...

AT THE TIME, ALL THE TRIAD-JUVENILES WERE DEVOTEES TO THE TEACHINGS OF IMPEDIARY ANTIMONISM IN BARO-CHAPEL.

ズズ…

ZRRDD…

THE DISASTER STRUCK WHEN OUR SILICON ANCESTORS RAIDED A HUMAN SETTLEMENT AND CAME INTO BATTLE WITH KILLY THE CALAMITY.

THE HUMANS SENT A LARGE BUILDER AFTER US. ITS BRAIN HAD BEEN IMPROPERLY ALTERED.

KADOOMM

ON MY RETINAL OVERLAY OF THE FORTRESS MAP, THE DOTS THAT INDICATED FELLOW SILICON CREATURES WINKED OUT ONE AFTER THE OTHER.

EVEN AS THE FORTRESS'S CENTRAL BRAIN SLOWLY PERISHED, IT CONTINUED TO DISPLAY THE IDEAL ESCAPE ROUTE.

I HAD CONTACT WITH MY SYMBIO-MOTHER NEAR THE EDGES OF THE FORTRESS, BUT SOON HER DOT VANISHED AS WELL.

EVENTUALLY THE NUMBER OF DOTS DWINDLED TO A HANDFUL, AND THE MESSAGES FROM THE FORTRESS ENDED...

ONLY EIGHT OF US MADE IT SAFELY THROUGH THE HUMANS' BLOCKADE...

WE ENCOUNTERED HUMANS ON MANY OCCASIONS DURING OUR LONG ESCAPE, AND ALL THE OTHER DOTS VANISHED.

RESTORING CONSCIOUS-NESS...

FORTY-SEVEN YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE I FELL...

MY BODY WAS IN AN AUTOMATED SHUTDOWN STATE TO REDUCE FUEL USAGE.

WARNING: AWAKENING IMMINENT. SOMETHING IS APPROACHING.

PROBABLY INTENDS TO SCRAP ME...

IT'S A SMALL BUILDER.

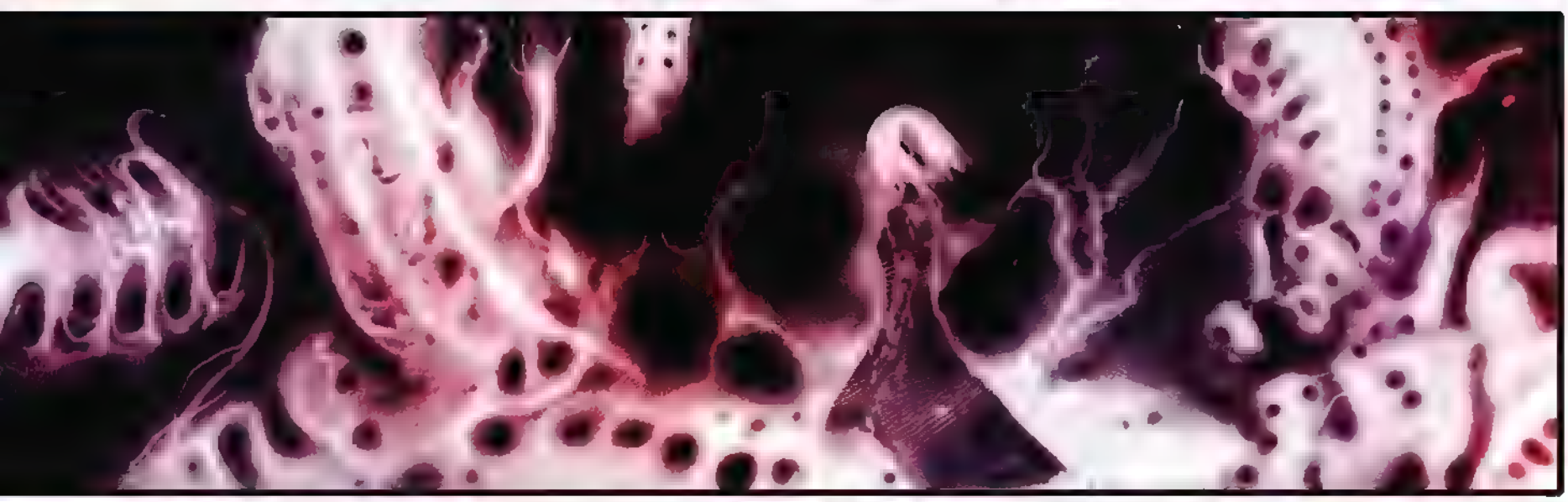
CLANK

VVMM

KGREE

BZAP

スル SLIP



GRRRMMM

BUT THERE'S A CONVER-SION TOWER... RIGHT IN FRONT OF THE EXIT...

IT'S A DEVICE THAT SUMMONS THE CITY'S GUARDIANS, BACK FROM THE AGE WHEN THE NETSPHERE EXISTED.

SO IT'S STILL INTACT...

QUOTH THE BOOK OF THE RUINED FLOORS: DO NOT INTER-FERE WITH THE RELICS OF THE NET-SPHERE...

THE FINAL MEGA-STRUC-TURE. AT LAST, I AM HERE.

TO HELL WITH THE TEACH-INGS.

WHUP

FSHUUU

BUT I AM SO TIRED...

SO I'M SUPPOSED TO FIND A SAFER EXIT, THEN...

DADOOM

BWOOSH

GWUOOH

GWOHHH

VVM...

A HIGH-LEVEL EXTERMINATOR!

CLANK CLANK

A...A HUMAN?!

ZSH

VMM

A GRAVITON BEAM EMITTER... THEN HE MUST BE...

KADOOM

BLAM

BLAM

ZRRDD

ズ゛゛

BLAM

KILLY. THE CALAMITY SAVED MY LIFE...

THE NEXT THING I KNEW, I WAS OUTSIDE THE CITY.

OH, GOOD... IT'S STILL INTACT.

STORED IN HERE IS THE MEMORY OF THE ENTIRE 74TH BRANCH CLAN.

IN THE HOPE OF REBUILDING MY HOME...

AND SO I ESCAPED THE CITY.

08

BLAME!
EIGHTH-GENERATION
PCELL'S MEGASTRUCTURE
ESCAPE CHRONICLE - END

09

GOD OF THE SWAMP

CHOKK

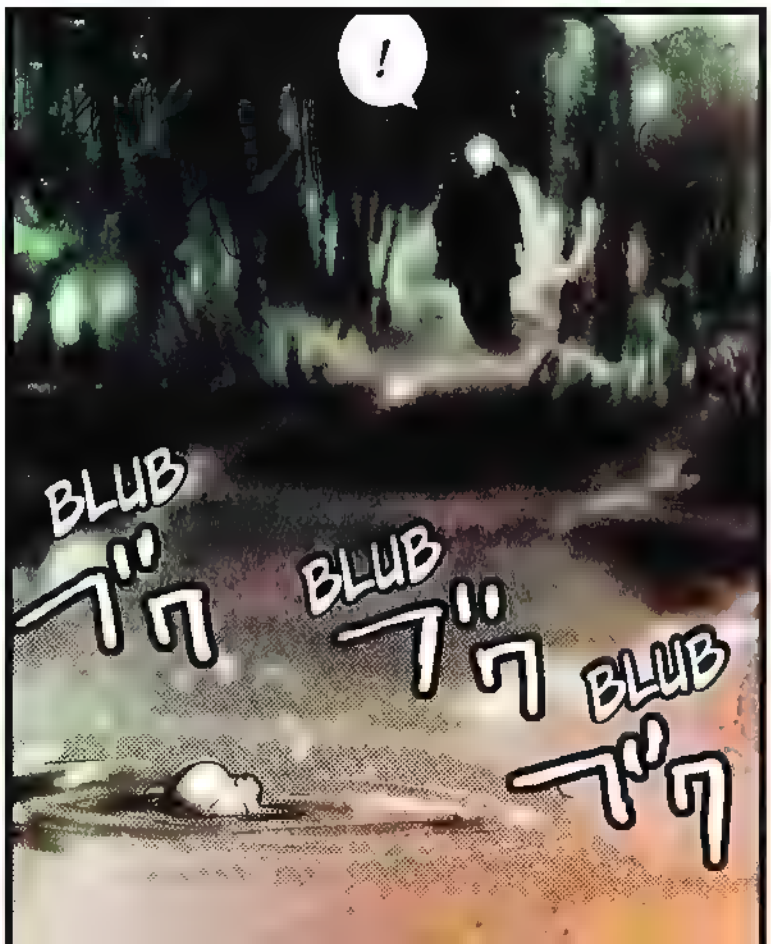
CHOKK

ZWOOP

OOPS!

SPLUSH

GLUB
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB


!
BLUB
BLUB
BLUB

ZA-

BLOOSH

BRUUAH

CHOMP CHOMP CHOMP

BWA BA BA BA

AAA AAA AAA

FLOD

09

GOD OF THE SWAMP - END

10

BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN HAWK MOTHS

WE ARE HEREBY CARRYING OUT AN ASSAULT ON ENEMY TERRITORY!!

THIS IS VENGEANCE FOR THE LOSS OF OUR PLANET, AND A CRUCIAL FOOTHOLD IN RECLAIMING THE EIGHTH ALLIED STARSPACE.

ALL UNITS, COMMIT TO CRUSH-ING THE ENEMY!

THIS SHIP WILL REACH THE THEATER OF OPERATIONS MOMENTARILY.

ALL ANTI-GAUNA ARMORED HAWK MOTHS, PREPARE FOR BATTLE!

REACHING ENEMY SPACE! UNLOCKING REVISED FISSION DRIVE!

SPATIAL CORRECTION COMPLETE. TELEPORTATION SUCCESSFUL.

ZZRRDDD

ズ!! ズ ズ ズ ズ ズ

ENEMY SHIP BELOW! LENGTH OF OVER 100 KILOMETERS!

HIGH-CAPACITY RESPONSE! THEY'RE FIRING!

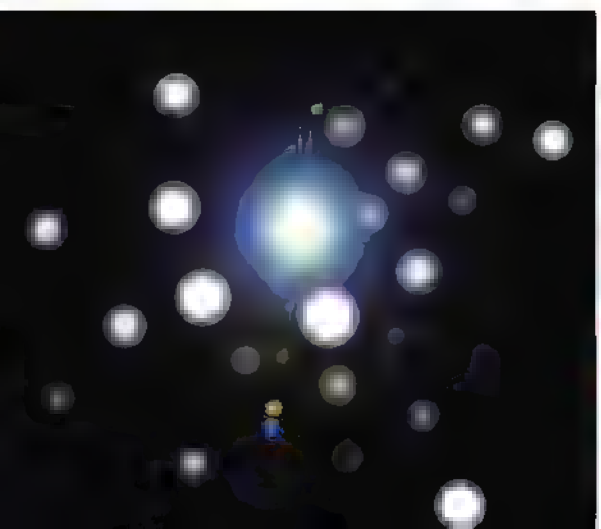
SORTIE HAWK MOTHS!

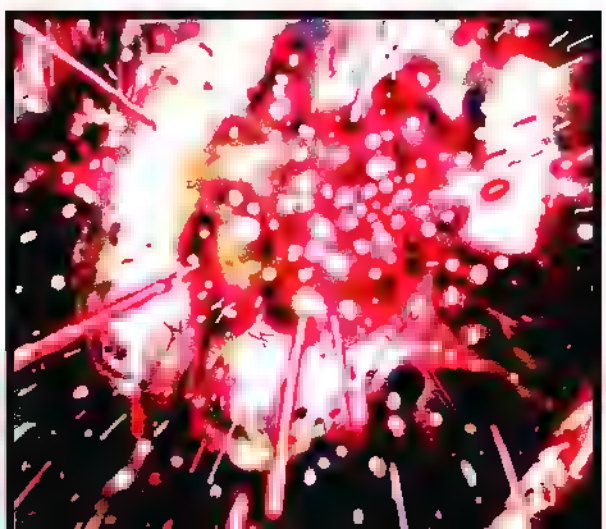
GSHUUU

ENEMY SHIP EMITTING GAUNAS!

SHELL HIT! DAMAGE TO 312 HATCHES!

DEPLOYING STAGNATION FIELD!





DOOM

VWOHHHH

DUDUDUDUDUMM

CARE-FUL OF THE ICE WALLS. THEY'LL REWRITE YOU.

CRIMSON HAWK MOTH PLATOON HAS INFILTRATED ENEMY SHIP.

UNIT 4!!!

ZWUM

CRIMSON PLATOON'S NOT GETTING THE SIGNAL. I'LL CALL THEM BACK.

WHERE ARE YOU GOING, UNIT 4?! RETREAT!

POWER OUTPUT DROPPING. RELEASING STAGNATION FIELD IN 30 SECONDS!

ABORT OPERATION! WITHDRAWING TO HIGHER SPACE-- ALL CRAFTS RETURN TO SHIP!

DOOM

ROLL

GAKK

ZRD

ZRD

ZRD

GRAKKK

CRIK

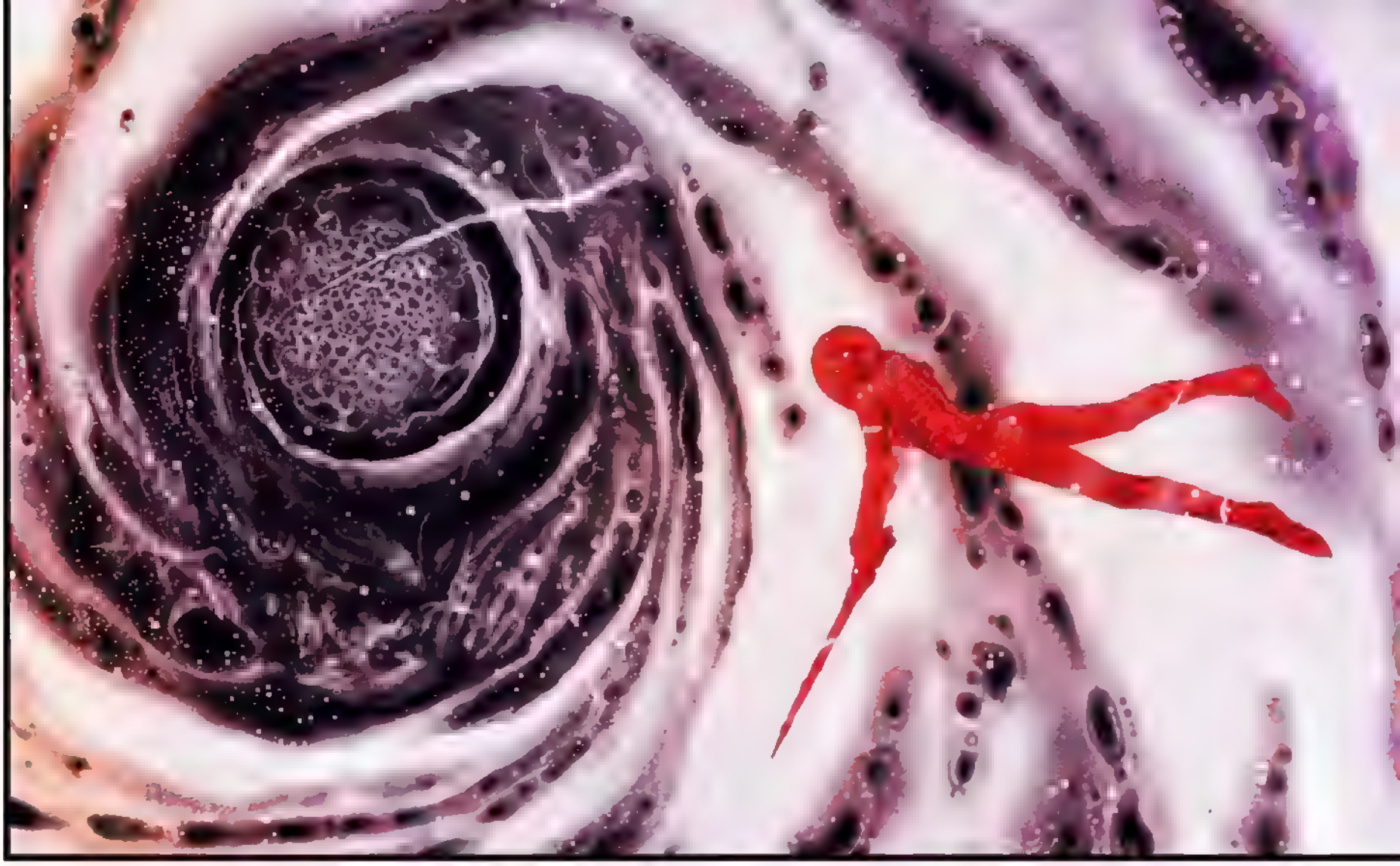
CRKKL

CRAK

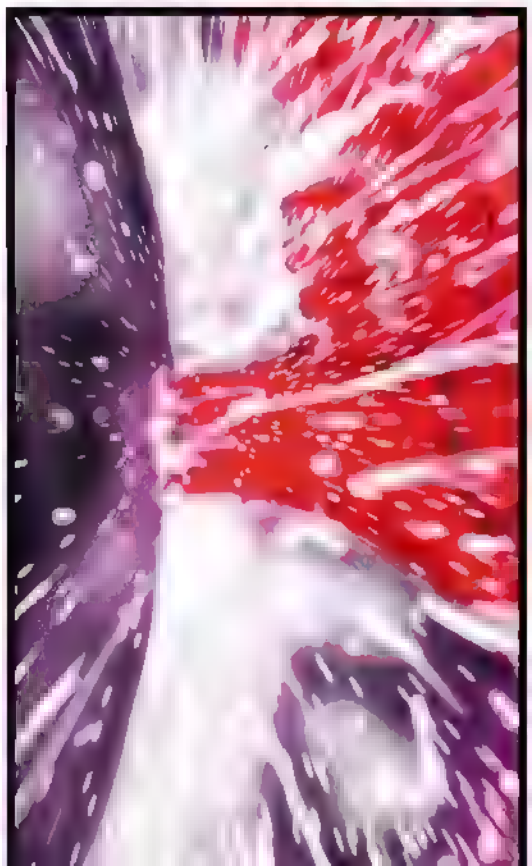
KRIKK

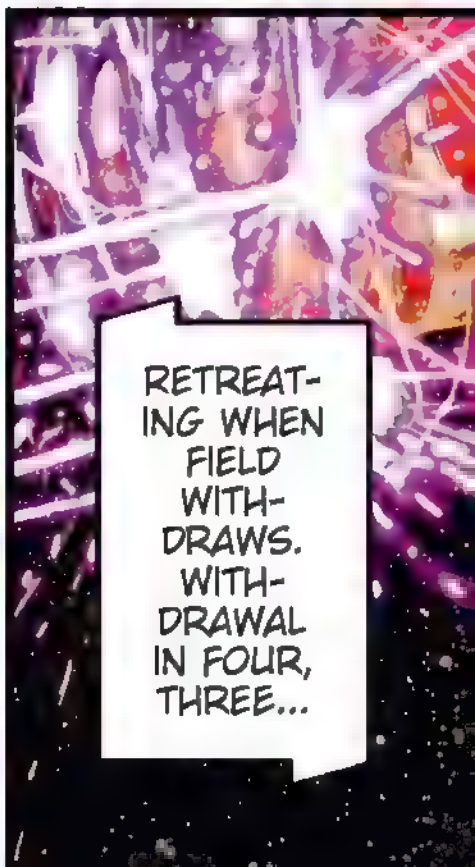
CHOMP

KCHING



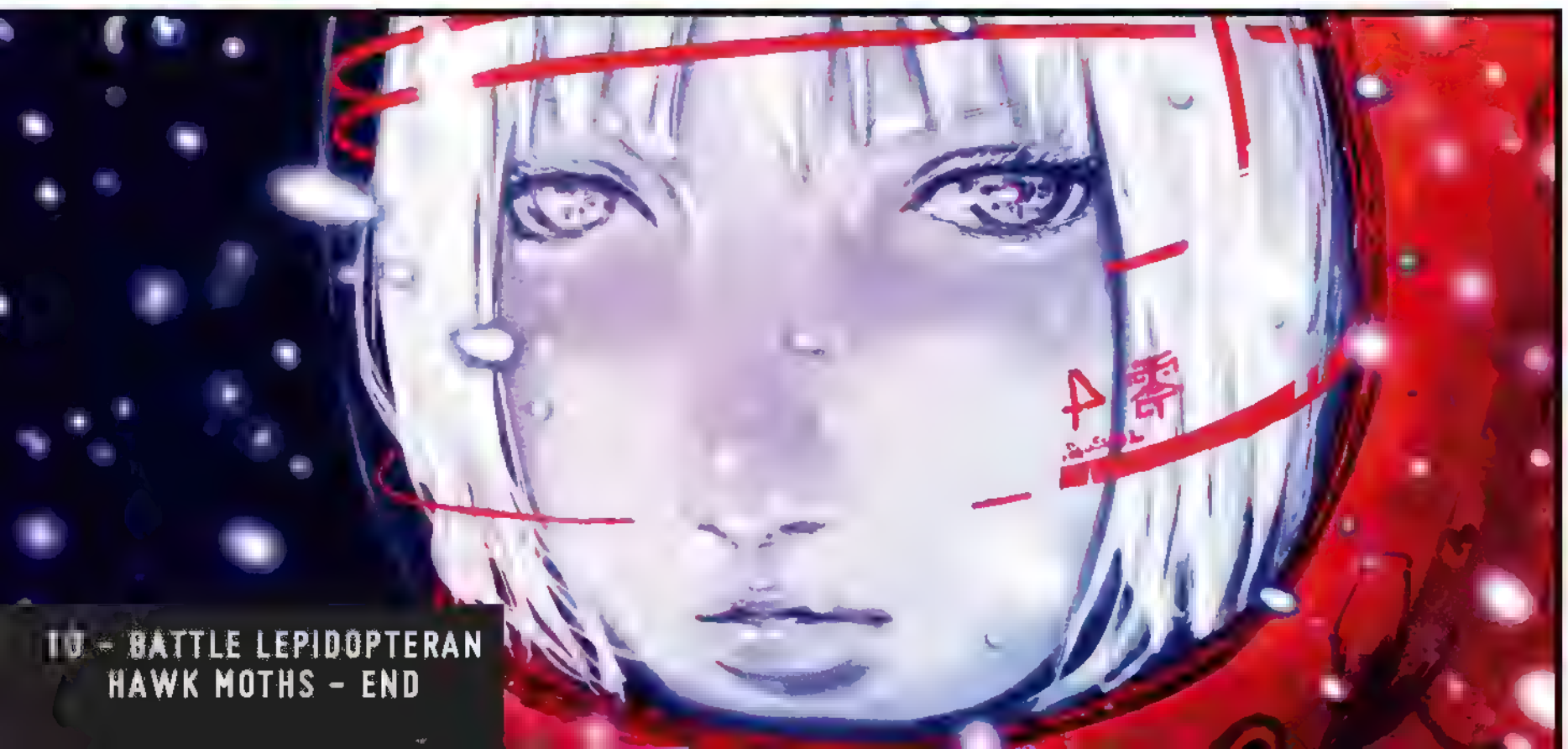
FLASH




RETREAT-
ING WHEN
FIELD
WITH-
DRAWS.
WITH-
DRAWAL
IN FOUR,
THREE...

ENEMY CRAFT DECOUPLING! CRIMSON HAWK MOTHS HAVE DESTROYED THE ENEMY CRAFT! WE ARE VICTORIOUS!

GRRRGGGG



10 - BATTLE LEPIDOPTERAN HAWK MOTHS - END

BLAME ACADEMY! AND SO ON
TSUTOMU NIHEI ANTHOLOGY / COMMENTARY

A FLOWER OF MOÉ BLOOMING IN THE SORROW OF KOWLOON BY TORU HONDA

I GOT A NOTICE FROM THE EDITOR I-UE ASKING FOR A PIECE OF COMMENTARY FOR A VOLUME OF *BLAME!*. BUT I DON'T HAVE THE KIND OF SCIENTIFIC MIND NEEDED TO TALK ABOUT HARD SF, AND I'VE BEEN ON THE RUN FROM MY HAYAKAWA EDITOR, SO I APOLOGIZED, SAYING THAT I COULDN'T DO IT.

BUT THEN I-UE SAID, "ACTUALLY, I WANT YOU TO COMMENT ON *BLAME ACADEMY!* INSTEAD!"

I SEE.

BLAME ACADEMY! IS A WORK FEATURING THE CHARACTERS OF THE ULTRA-HARD DYSTOPIAN SF SERIES *BLAME!*, IN WHICH THE UNCONTROLLED EXPANSION OF TECHNOLOGY THRUSTS HUMANITY INTO A GIANT DEAD WORLD, PLACED INTO THE SETTING OF A SCHOOL MANGA, FOR SOME REASON. IT'S A SERIES OF STORIES THAT MAKE ALL OF ITS READERS WONDER IF SOMETHING HAPPENED TO POOR NIHEI-SENSEI. BY THE THIRD STORY, THE CHARACTERS NO LONGER RESEMBLE THEIR ORIGINAL SELVES, RESULTING IN A COMBINATION OF SMOOTH, BUSTY FEMALES STRAIGHT OUT OF *AIR GEAR* ALONGSIDE HAUNTED DYSTOPIAN CREATURES FROM SOME HORRIFIC REALM. IN FACT, I COULD GO MORE INTO DETAIL ON THE FINER BIZARRITIES OF THE STORIES, BUT THAT WOULD SPOIL THE SURPRISE, SO IF YOU HAVEN'T YET, I HIGHLY RECOMMEND READING THEM TO SEE THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR MOÉ EVOLUTION.

IT MAY DEPEND ON THE READER'S OPINION WHETHER OR NOT THAT COUNTS AS "FORWARD EVOLUTION," HOWEVER.

EACH STORY ENDS WITH A VERY CLICHÉD PATTERN OF CIBO'S PANTIES, FULL FRONTAL NUDITY, OR NIPPLES ACCIDENTALLY THRUST INTO KILLY'S VIEW, PROMPTING HER TO PUMMEL HIM. IT'S A CONCEPT I'D LOVE TO SEE IN A MONTHLY FORMAT. BY THE WAY, THE THIRD STORY FEATURED AN EDITORIAL BLURB CALLING IT "WORLD-CENTRIC SF," BUT WHAT EXACTLY MAKES THIS "WORLD-CENTRIC" WILL BE AN ETERNAL MYSTERY. MORE ON THAT TERM LATER.

AT THE START OF THE 21ST CENTURY, JAPAN'S CREATIVE WORLD WAS THRUST INTO A MYSTERIOUS "MOÉ BOOM." PERHAPS THE START OF THE MOÉ BOOM CAME WHEN SGT. FROG SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE GREAT FRENCH PROPHET NOSTRADAMUS'S PREDICTION OF THE GREAT KING OF TERROR WAS NONE OTHER THAN THE ADORABLE TEEN ANGOL MOIS-CHAN

THE LATE 20TH CENTURY WAS OVERFLOWING WITH POSTMODERN NIHILISM, LEADING TO A MIRACULOUS STORM OF DYSTOPIAN FICTION. TECHNOLOGY, THE SYMBOL OF BRIGHT PROGRESS SINCE THE LATE 19TH CENTURY, MADE A TURNABOUT INTO A WEAPON THAT THREATENED HUMAN SOCIETY IN COUNTLESS STORIES THROUGHOUT JAPAN AFTER THE OIL SHOCKS OF THE 1970S. EVEN THE CAPITALIST SUPERPOWER OF AMERICA WAS DARKENED BY THE GRAY FUTURE OF TECHNOLOGY RUN AMOK.

THIS "ANTIFUTURIST" VIEW IS EXEMPLIFIED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF THE AMERICAN MOVIE *BLADE RUNNER* AND THE CONCURRENT TREND OF CYBERPUNK SF, AS WELL AS THE TWIN PILLARS OF POST-WAR JAPANESE MANGA AND ANIME, *AKIRA* AND *NEON GENESIS EVANGELION*.

THE CONCLUSION TO THE "GRAND NARRATIVE" IN REAL LIFE CAME WITH THE FALL OF THE BERLIN WALL AND THE SOVIET UNION, BUT IN THE WORLD OF CREATIVE FICTION, THIS PHENOMENON EVOLVED RAPIDLY THROUGHOUT THE 80S AND 90S.

THE GRAND NARRATIVE OF THE LATTER 20TH CENTURY WAS BELIEF THAT CAPITALISM AND TECHNOLOGY WOULD LEAD HUMANITY TO A HAPPY FUTURE. BUT THE SF PRODUCED AFTER *BLADE RUNNER* WAS THE NEGATIVE OF THIS BELIEF, ITS ANTI-TECHNOLOGICAL IMPRINT, AND THE CONCLUSION OF THE MODERN NIHILISM OF CAPITALIST IDEOLOGY.

BUT WHEN THE 21ST CENTURY CAME, HUMANITY DID NOT PERISH.

IT BROUGHT ABOUT THE RISE OF THE "WORLD-CENTRIC" STORY, OR IN OTHER WORDS, A STORY IN WHICH THE NARRATOR'S OWN STRUGGLE, USUALLY ROMANTIC, IS EXPANDED TO HAVE WORLDWIDE RAMIFICATIONS. OR AS I LIKE TO CALL THEM, "3-METER-RADIUS STORIES," AFTER THE PERSONAL DISTANCE THAT SUPPOSEDLY FOSTERS ROMANCE. IF THE PHILOSOPHY OF THESE STORIES WAS SUMMED UP IN ONE STATEMENT, IT WOULD BE, "I DON'T NEED AN EVANGELION, I DON'T CARE ABOUT HUMANITY, I JUST WANT TO HIT IT OFF WITH CHICKS!"

THESE WORLD-CENTRIC STORIES STILL RETAINED THE TRAPPINGS OF SF ELEMENTS AND LITERARY CYNICISM AS AN "EXCUSE," BUT EVENTUALLY THOSE EXTERNAL IMPURITIES WERE ELIMINATED, LEAVING ONLY THE PURIFIED, BLIND HOPE OF MOÉ, AND THE IDOLIZATION OF THE CHARACTER.

IN THE CYCLE OF THE PRODUCTION AND CONSUMPTION OF STORIES, THIS MOVEMENT WAS AKIN TO THE AUTHOR, EDITOR, AND READER EACH SIMULTANEOUSLY ABANDONING THEIR SELF-AWARENESS AT ONCE.

IT WAS THE ARRIVAL OF THE MOÉ BOOM.

AMID THIS AVALANCHE PHENOMENON, MANY OF THE GREAT DYSTOPIAN ARTISTS OF THE 80S AND 90S BEGAN TO ATTEMPT THEIR OWN MOĒ WORKS IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY, AN ACT OF MASS SUICIDE THAT WOULD MAKE LEMMINGS PROUD.

HIDEYUKI FURUHASHI, A HARD SF LIGHT-NOVELIST WHO PLUMBED THE DEPTHS OF DYSTOPIAN LITERATURE SINCE HIS DEBUT, *BLACK ROD*, AND DID MUCH FOR THE RISE OF THE DENGEKI BUNKO PUBLISHING LINE, UNVEILED THE HEARTWARMING FAMILY COMEDY THE *TATSUMORIS' DINNER TABLE* IN 2000. IT WAS A QUESTIONABLE ATTEMPT AT MOĒ, GIVEN THAT THE MAIN HEROINE WAS MADE OF METAL AND GALACTIC WARFARE PROMPTLY ERUPTED, BUT FURUHASHI CONTINUED TO EXPERIMENT WITH MOĒ ALONGSIDE HIS DARKER WORK, UNTIL IN 2006 HE PUBLISHED *ULTRA SISTER WARS SISMAGEDDON*, WHICH WAS ESSENTIALLY IF ALL 108 "STARS OF DESTINY" FROM THE SUIKODEN EPIC WERE DEPICTED AS LITTLE SISTERS.

THE *EVEN A MONKEY CAN DRAW MANGA* DUO OF KENTARO TAKEKUMA AND KOJI AIHARA ATTEMPTED TO TRACE THE RISE OF THE MOĒ ART-STYLE AND ANALYZE THE BOOM IN THE 21ST CENTURY IN THEIR INIMITABLE STYLE. EVENTUALLY, KENTARO TAKEKUMA, A LIVING LEGEND OF THE DYSTOPIAN STYLE IF EVER THERE WAS ONE, ATTEMPTED *EVEN A MONKEY 2.0*, A HARUHI SUZUMIYA-STYLED MOĒ CHARACTER PROJECT, WHICH BACKFIRED SPECTACULARLY.

I CAN ALSO VIVIDLY RECALL THE SF GREAT YASUTAKA TSUTSUI CARELESSLY ATTEMPTING A "LIGHT NOVEL" IN THE MAGAZINE FAUST WITH ILLUSTRATIONS FROM HARUHI'S NOIZI ITO.

EVER SINCE *S-F MAGAZINE* DID A FEATURE ON WORLD-CENTRIC STORIES, THE LITERARY WORLD AND ITS LONG DOWNTURN WERE PUT ON A COLLISION COURSE WITH MOĒ. EVEN *KOKUBUNGAKU*, THE MOST HARDLINE OF LITERARY MAGAZINES, PUT TOGETHER A MOĒ SPECIAL ISSUE.

ALL OF WHICH IS TO SAY THAT THE EXTRAORDINARY MOĒ BOOM IS SOMETHING LIKE A JAPANESE SELF-DEFENSE MECHANISM IN RESPONSE TO THE NIHILISM OF THE UNKNOWN 21ST CENTURY FOLLOWING THE LOSS OF THE GREAT NARRATIVE. THEREFORE, ALL THE MARKETS FOR OUR STORYTELLING MUST BE PAINTED OVER IN THE COLORS OF MOĒ, FOR WE HAVE LOST ALL OF THE STORIES WE ARE MEANT TO TELL.

...WELL, NOW THAT I'VE WRITTEN A BUNCH OF STUFFY POSTMODERN NONSENSE THAT AMOUNTS TO ANALYSIS AND HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE CREATION OF BACKGROUND OF *BLAME ACADEMY!*, I'LL CONSIDER MY WORK HERE DONE. IF ANY PROBLEM WITH THIS EXISTS, IT SURELY LIES IN THE POOR JUDGMENT OF EDITOR I-IE, WHOSE ONLY MISSION IS TO CONTINUE DEMANDING POOR TSUTOMU NIHEI TO "TAKE CIBO'S CLOTHES OFF!" AND "DRAW CIBO'S NIPPLES AGAIN!"

AFTERNOON IS PRIMARILY KNOWN FOR THE FEEL-GOOD VIBES OF *OH! MY GODDESS*, BUT AS A RESPONSE TO THE GREATNESS OF BELLDANDY, THE REST OF THE MAGAZINE HAS TURNED INTO A DYSTOPIAN FORTRESS, A VERITABLE KOWLOON WALLED CITY OF MOURNING. AS A MATTER OF FACT, I WOULD LOVE TO SEE AN ANTHOLOGY OF *ALL* THE *AFTERNOON* MANGA DONE IN A *MOÉ* STYLE, NOT JUST *BLAME!*. I WANT TO READ *MOÉ LOVE-YAN*, WHERE LOVE-YAN HAS EYEBALLS THAT TAKE UP HALF HER FACE, AND AN IDEALIZED KAZUFUSA DRAWN LIKE THE PROTAGONIST OF AN ERO-GAME, FLIRTING IT UP IN A SCHOOL SETTING. HOW ABOUT A *CRAYFISH STUDENT PRESIDENT*, WHERE ALL THE TEEN GIRLS FORM A HAREM CLAMORING FOR CRAYFISH'S ATTENTION? GIVEN THAT THE AUTHOR IS A FAN OF THE KEY GAME DEVELOPER, IT'S EASY TO ENVISION A *BLADE OF THE IMMORTAL ACADEMY*, AND I'D LOVE TO SEE *MOZUYA-SAN* GO EVEN FURTHER DOWN THE ROAD OF MOÉ CLICHÉ (VOICED BY RIE KUGIMIYA). PERSONALLY, I FIND *MYSTERIOUS GIRLFRIEND X* TO BE THE GREATEST MOÉ MANGA THERE IS, SO JUST PICTURE MIKOTO IN OUR IMAGINARY *MOÉ AFTERNOON* SPECIAL ISSUE, WEARING CAT EARS AND CAT TAIL, ENORMOUS EYES WELLING WITH TEARS AS SHE BATTLES A MYSTERY UFO WITH HER SCISSORS, PROCLAIMING, "THEY'RE NOT PANTIES, SO I'M NOT ASHAMED!"

BUT OF COURSE, THE CENTERPIECE OF MY MAGAZINE WILL BE *YES, SATOSHI KARASUYA-TAN REALLY IS MOÉ.*

POSTSCRIPT: BOOM-AND-BUST CYCLES TEND TO LAST TEN YEARS. PERHAPS WHEN THE DYSTOPIAN MOURNING STORY COMES BACK INTO VOGUE, THE *BLAME!* SERIES WILL MAKE ITS TRIUMPHANT RETURN.

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